

The Crimson Vanguard

Chapter1: For the Greater Good

Three days had passed since the Dark Lord Voldemort had been vanquished by a small boy. Three days filled with the final battles of the war. Three days where the boy had been under constant surveillance in a hospital. The savior of the wizarding world, loved by the people, hated by his enemies but desired by all. Even forces uninvolved in the war were after the boy.

"You are completely sure that the boy is here?" An man in gray robes looked upon his accomplice with skepticism. "You know what our master has ordered us we cannot tolerate any mistakes or else it will be our undoing, don't forget who protects the child."

"I know, you don't have to repeat yourself Conrad. And yes the boy is currently here in this hospital. They brought him here shortly after it happened for examination. Only the child is here, maybe some guards but his family was sent home earlier so no one will be in the room." The young man looked stressed. The dangers of their mission were worse enough even without his partner bickering about anything. To break into a protected room at St. Mungos to steal a child was hard enough, but this was no ordinary boy, no this boy would be well protected. They hailed him as their savior and would not let any harm befall him.

"You better watch out for any difficulties. We have no idea whether our portkeys work inside that building. And Martin, do not screw up again, our master would not see kindly to another failure on your part." With narrowed eyes Conrad watched his young partner as they walked down the path to the famous wizard hospital.

The entire building was filled with people, the last battles of the war had just come to an end with the remaining Death Eaters fleeing from their opponents after their masters downfall. Many wounded were now treated here. So many wounded from all ages, young and old alike. It truly had been a cruel war, especially in its last days.

The lobby was full of people seeking family members and friends among the patients, the hospital staff was completely overextended. The perfect situation to slip in unnoticed. To find the room of the

boy-who-lived was relatively easy. It was the only room with a full auror squad as guards. Now the hard part would be to enter the room without those aurors seeing them.

"So how do we get in there Conrad? Fighting our way through?" Martin was nervous, he would easily screw up and start flinging spells at those aurors but luckily Conrad had other allies that would help them.

"No Martin. Keep your wand hidden and stop fidgeting around." Conrad had a close look at his wristwatch. "Two more minutes, lets pray this works." He muttered more to himself than to his partner, but Martin heard him and looked at him questioningly.

"What will happen Conrad?" Martin started looking around, wondering what would happen that Conrad was waiting for.

Before Conrad would even think about answering his companion a large commotion could be heard from a around a corner. People screaming 'Death Eaters' ran by, desperately trying to get away. The aurors were quick to act and all of them but one ran down the corridor to deal with whatever awaited them there.

Conrad wasted no second. As soon as the aurors had vanished around the nearest corner shouting and other sounds of battling could be heard. Conrad quickly took out his own wand, gesturing his partner to do the same as they slowly moved towards the room where the boy was kept. But that happened not without the last auror noticing them, fixing them with a firm gaze. "I am sorry gentleman but no visitors to the boy at the moment. If you wish to express your gratitude do so by writing a letter or something like that but the child cannot be visited."

Before the auror could react he was faced with two wands, the wizards those wands belonged to murmuring hexes. While Conrad simply tried to go with a stunning spell, Martin used a strong bludgeon hex, blasting the auror against a nearby wall where the man remained motionless. All this happened relatively unnoticed by anyone around as most people had already fled the floor.

"You fool. You should have stunned him not blasted him to pieces. Pray no one has seen us. Come now and keep your head down."

Conrad was irate at the foolishness of his partner, but they had no time to spare and quickly entered the room.

The room was typical for a hospital. Only simply furniture, a desk, two chairs, a drawer and a bed in the middle. On the bed lay the sleeping form of a small boy, the boy-who-lived. To keep the child from alerting anyone Conrad stunned the sleeping kid and quickly picked him up.

"Now pray that these portkeys work Martin or else we are done for." Bot wizards took out small jewels, formed like tears and muttered the password for their portkeys. They let out a relieved sigh when the devices sprung into action and quickly pulled them away from this dangerous situation. They had accomplished their mission, their master would be most pleased with them. To wizarding Britain this day would always be remembered as the day they had lost one of their heroes, lost him to an unknown enemy.

Conrad and Martin found themselves far away from Britain, in a cottage somewhere hidden in eastern Bavaria. They had used this house as a hideout quite often, no one would suspect any wrongdoings here, the people were friendly but never nosy, perfect to hide. But they were not alone in that house, a tall woman with long blond hair and radiant blue eyes awaited them with a scowl on her face.

Conrad payed her no attention at first, he proceeded to one of the sleeping rooms and put down the young boy on a bed. The child still had a peaceful expression on his face, he had not noticed anything happening to him, not how he was taken and not how he was quickly brought across half of Europe in the blink of an eye.

"What have you done to the child Conrad? My father ordered you not to hurt him at any cost." The woman quickly went to the child, checking him for injuries.

"Don't you worry Selene. We have done nothing to harm him, I simply stunned him so he won't wake up before we got here. He is perfectly fine. And having him stunned will make the next part easier." With this Conrad turned around, facing his partner. "And you Martin, go outside and make sure we are undisturbed." His tone was cold, demanding. Martin left quickly, knowing he would get scolded

later anyways for his actions in the hospital but he would be a fool to make it worse now.

"You are sure we have to do this to him Conrad? He is still young maybe we should not put him through something such painful as..." Selene was unsure whether their plans with the child were good, she felt pity towards the boy.

"We have to Selene. First we have to wipe his memory of his first year of life and then you will give him the potion. Master has ordered us to go through with a blood adoption and we do it, no matter how painful it will be for the child. And you always wanted a child did you not?" Conrad arched an eyebrow at the woman, she was one of the first to agree to this plan and now she hesitated.

"Fine, but you do it. I can't bring myself to hurt a child like this." With this Selene turned away, no longer able to watch what would happen now.

Conrad simply sighed. "Sometimes I wonder if you really are his daughter Selene. You are nothing like your father." She frowned at Conrad, being compared to her father always was touchy subject for her. She grew up without his influence and was quite sure it was for the better this way., even though many still believed the daughter would be like her father, especially Conrad thought so before he got to know her better. Conrad saw her reaction to his words, decided though to leave the situation without comment and took out his wand again, placing the tip of it on the young boys temple. "Have you chosen a name for him? I will need it when I plant his new identity in his mind."

"Father and I have agreed to call him Alexander." For a moment Selene looked at the child on the bed, the boy would soon be her son in every way, even in blood. She would raise him in the way her own father had intended to raise his heir, but he never got the chance as he only had a daughter and no other children.

"Alexander, a fine name for the heir of a great man. He will do your family proud. It always makes me sad that we are unable to have children of our own. But it won't matter, he will soon be our son and then nothing else will hinder us to live the life we deserve." Conrad muttered a memory spell, all the boy had been to his day was lost, his new life began now.

After a few moments of planting false memories about his new family in the head of the child Conrad stood up and took a flask from the nearby desk. "One drop of blood from you and me. That is all it takes now to make him our son Selene. " He picked his finger, blood dripping slowly from the wound into the flask. Selene came closer, repeating Conrads actions, thereby completing the potion for a blood adoption. A blood ritual, forbidden in most of the magical societies these days, but it was hard to proof once completed so as long as no one interfered here, nothing could happen to them.

The potion took effect quickly after they gave it to the boy. His body started convulsing, pain visible on his face, sweat running down his face. He would have screamed would he have been awake but the stunning spell kept him from waking up. When the process had ended the boy looked different. His once black hair was brown now, the same shade as Conrades hair. His eyes had changed from green to the radiant blue of Selenes. His entire facial features had changed. The only thing that remained of his former appearance was a small lightning bold scar on his forehead. Selene frowned at seeing the scar, they would have to do something about that thing, it could give away who this boy had been in the past, but for the moment all was well and the boy had returned to sleep peacefully.

"I have to go now Selene, I have to report to your father that everything had proceeded as planed." He gave Selene a soft kiss on the cheek before he left the room. Martin was waiting outside, looking expectantly. Conrad sighed. "What is it Martin?"

"I was wondering, how did you know Death Eaters would attack the hospital at that moment Conrad? I mean it was definitely no coincidence."

"You are right boy. One of our ... contacts in their ranks gave them a portkey to the hospital under the pretext of giving them a chance for revenge. Oh well unfortunately they ended up separated across several floors, making them easy prey for the aurors but enough of a diversion for us to take the boy." During this explanation Martin looked with awe at Conrad. "For now you have to stay here and protect Selene and the boy. I will report our missions success."

Martin merely nodded while Conrad left the building and apparated to another hidden location, the place his master was supposedly incarcerated.

Meanwhile in St Mungos things had finally calmed down after the unexpected attack from the remaining dark wizards. All attackers were quickly subdued but to the shock of all present people the boy-who-lived had disappeared. His guard was heavily wounded and no one doubted that a Death Eater must have broken through to the boy and taken him away to exact revenge upon the child. This day the wizards and witches of Britain mourned the loss of their hero, only 3 days after he had beaten the greatest dark lord that had ever been seen.

In his office at Hogwarts one Albus Dumbledore currently faced the parents of the missing boy, the Potters were clearly at the end of their powers, all that had happened the last few days was just too much.

"But Professor there must be something we can do. He might be still alive, maybe it weren't Death Eaters that took our Harry." James Potter was pleading to his mentor, hoping that the wise old wizard would know a way to save their boy.

"I am afraid not James. He disappeared during a large scale attack from dark wizards and the way the guard to his room had been attacked leaves no doubt that he was taken by them. I dare not say what they would do to him, but we have to assume that he is dead by now." At this words Lily Potter started crying again, the thought alone was too painful.

"But professor. Is there nothing..." James knew there was no helping it, his son was lost.

"No James. But we have to protect you, your wife and your remaining child from them. Those monsters will not stop with him, they will try to get you and especially Harry's twin sister as well. Young Rose was in the same room as Harry when the Dark Lord was defeated and they will no doubt try to kill her as well." Dumbledores face was somber, he had already failed this family once and he would not fail them again. He would at least protect their remaining child from harm.

"My family has a old house back in Scotland, we could ward it and place it under a Fidelus charm again. But this time with a trustworthy secret keeper. I still can't believe Peter was one of them." James face contorted in rage when he remembered the betrayal of one of his dearest friends.

"Yes, I will act as the keeper myself this time . I know you thought about Sirius, but he is in enough trouble for blowing up Peter in the presence of muggles. It will be hard to keep them from putting him in Askaban for a few years but I will try to keep him out of there. You will need him now more then ever as a friend and guardian." Dumbledore had stood up and placed a hand on James shoulder. "I will not fail your family again James, you will be safe."

Conrad had arrived at his destination. A menacing building, hidden on an island in the Black Sea. Not many knew of the existence of this place. He walked through the large entry of the building, the stones above sported an engraving. 'For the Greater Good', yeah right thought Conrad. He knew that all they were doing right now was for the greater good of the magical beings.

He walked down the corridors of Nurmengard, the magical prison build by his master and father in law. The prison was empty except for one 'prisoner'. The only inmate though was not as bound to this place as his former opponents wanted him to be.

Conrad reached the top of the tower were the cell of his master was located. There were no bars here, only magical wards were supposed to keep the prisoner inside his room. The elf that was responsible for keeping the prisoner alive only came in the morning, delivering food and water for the day. The rest of the time the inmate was alone. Only one visitor came by from time to time. But right now no one except Conrad was here to visit. He knocked on the door waiting for a reply before he entered.

"Ah Conrad. You look pleased so the job went well I presume?" On a chair near a window sat an bald old man looking out onto the sea, a book still in his lap.

"Yes master. Everything went well. We have the boy and we have already finished the ritual. For all it is worth the boy is now Alexander Gellert Grindelwald, son of Conrad Jaeger and Selene Grindelwald and heir of Gellert Grindelwald." Conrad uttered the

name of his new son with pride. He knew his father in law would be most pleased, the moment he heard of Voldemorts fate he wanted that boy, knowing he would be a protege of his former friend Albus Dumbledore. They decided fast what to do and acted even faster. Within three days they had planed to abduct the child and carried out their plans successfully.

"Good. This is very good Conrad. I expect you to bring the boy to me once he is old enough to face this place. Until then I have already planned the training schedule for the boy. The blood adoption is nice and good to make all traces of his past disappear but I want you to do a bit more. A friend of mine is in possession of a time turner that will help you train the boy." At this Gellert handed Conrad an envelope with all the necessary information inside.

"A time turner, but sir wouldn't such a thing be detrimental to the boy? He would age faster while we use that thing, there is nothing to win, he could learn the same things in a normal time frame." Conrad was worried what Selene would say to her fathers plans for the boy.

"You doubt my plan Conrad?" His voice was sharp, sending chills down Conrads spine. "To have the boy age faster is exactly my plan. I want the boy to be two years older then he would normally be, this will ensure that no one would ever get the idea of him being Harry Potter. He is now part of my family and I won't have anyone interfere with him do you understand that Conrad?"

"Yes sir, I fully understand now. I will proceed according to your plan." Conrad bowed slightly before the man, not willing to make him angry by further questioning his plans.

"Good. And tell my daughter that I do not wish for her to spoil the kid rotten. Just because she always wanted a child I will not have her spoil my heir." The old wizard knew his daughter well and that is why he would never let her act freely in this regard. "Leave now Conrad."

With another bow Conrad left the room. On his way down the tower he contemplated what he had just learned of his masters plans. The boy would have to go through a rough childhood that was for sure. But in the end he would come out as a strong wizard, superior to all others of his age. He would succeed where his grandfather had failed. He was born to rule, reborn to be more precise but that is not the point. And all would happen 'for the Greater Good'.

Well so much for the beginning of this hopefully enjoyable story. There have been stories about Harry being raised by many different people, Snape, Bellatrix and even the Krums but here I have decided to have him as the heir to a character with great potential. Grindelwald is much too interesting to be forgotten as a major character but alas there are only few stories about him. A bigger part of the future story will also play in Durmstrang, though there will still be references and passages about the things that happen in Hogwarts until the point when both schools meet.

That's it so far. Please a review.

Chapter2: Tempus fugit

Five years had already past since the fateful day when Harry Potter was abducted from his hospital bed in St. Mungos. In Britain almost everyone had already given up on the boy by now. The only persons still searching for the boy-who-lived were Albus Dumbledore and his proteges James Potter and Sirius Black. Both were famous Aurors now, known for finding Death Eaters in hiding. But every time they found another nest of the dark wizards they were disappointed again. None of them knew anything about Harry, it was as if they had never gotten their hands on him. But they would not stop now, they would continue until they either have found the boy or all of the Death Eaters were captured and locked away.

Today was also the day that six year old Alexander Grindelwald would meet his grandfather for the first time. Only accompanied by his father young Alexander climbed up the stairs to the top of the prison tower. He felt unwell in this place, he would not admit that he was scared but he could not really hide it either.

"Do not worry my son. You should not show any sign of fear in the presence of your grandfather. He is a proud and powerful man and you as his heir are required to live up to his standards." Conrad had talked about this with his son before, but now seeing his son feeling unwell he felt compelled to lecture him again. "Be polite but not submissive. Never lie to your grandfather, he will know the moment you try and will punish you for such insolence."

This lecture went on until they had reached the door to Gellert Grindelwalds room. A short knock later Alexander and Conrad entered the room, seeing the old wizard in his usual place near the window, a contemplative look on his face.

"Ah Conrad, I expected you to come. And this must be my heir. Come here boy, let me see you more closely." A bit hesitant Alexander walked over to his grandfather, his hesitation making the old man scowl.

"What is this? Are you afraid of me boy? As your grandfather I expect you to respect me, not fear me." His angered voice made the boy stop in his tracks for a moment, before he walked on to the man near the widow.

"Hm, he looks more like Selene, the Grindelwald side of the family seems to prevail once more." He eyed the boy curiously. "So Alexander, have you trained while you are at home?" He directed the question at the child and not at his father, he wanted to see the reaction of the small boy.

"Yes sir. My parents and their friends have trained me every day for the last few years." Alexander was glad that he did not stutter the sentence though he nearly had.

"Very good. I am pleased Conrad. Tell me how advanced is his training?" The old man's focus never left the boy, though he was talking to his father now.

"His physical training is far advanced, we have focused in teaching him to defend himself without magic and will soon teach him how to wield a sword. He has started reading up literature that children twice his age would not even look at. His magical training lacks at the moment though, as without a wand there is nothing more but theory we can teach him. Wandless casting is not an option for a child so young and getting a wand from any maker at the moment would draw unwanted attention as we have hidden his existence to this day." Grindelwald nodded to every point, but when he heard about the lack in magical training he scowled at his son in law.

"What is this nonsense Conrad. His magical training is of utmost importance. I will not have him attend Durmstrang unprepared. If you need a wand then try a wand crafter, they will do a specially fitted wand for the boy. I know that the old man Gregorowitsch is still among the living, visit him and send him my regards along with an order to craft a wand for my heir. I doubt he will create a second Elder wand for the boy but at least he will get one superior to most others."

"As you wish master." Conrad would not go against this, though he feared the old wand crafter might still harbor a grudge against Grindelwald for stealing the Elder wand in the past.

Meanwhile Grindelwald had a closer look at his heir, his eyes stopped at the scar on the boy's head. "You have found no way to remove the scar Conrad?"

"I am afraid not master. The scar is from a magical wound. The curse used for this scar was never reported to create wounds at all. It is quite the mystery to all of us."

Grindelwald thought for a few moments what could be done about that scar. The same time Alexander felt a little more courageous and looked around the room, seeing some parchments on the desk near his grandfather he came closer and took one of the rolled pieces of paper, much to his grandfathers disliking.

Grindelwald took a paper knife from the desk and lunged at the boy. He hit the boy on the forehead, where his scar was, ripping it open with the knife, prolonging it far down his forehead over his right eyebrow. The boy was rooted in fear and unable to avoid the old man.

"Never take any of my documents without asking, foolish boy. This audacity towards me I will not accept. Don't you ever forget boy." the old wizard was irate as he spat the words at the boy. Conrad stood nearby, shocked to silence. Alex just looked at his grandfather, not understanding why the man attacked him, blood slowly dripping from the wound on his face.

After a few moments of awkward silence the old man placed a hand on the boys shoulder, speaking to him in a calmer voice, "Understand that I will punish mistakes and reward correct behavior boy. I do not hurt you for the fun of it but I will do it if needed to teach you." He placed his other hand above the boys bleeding wound, murmuring a healing spell, sealing the wound to a small scar running from his forehead down to his eyebrow. "You did not cry, not scream. This is good boy, such willpower will do you good in the future." With this he released the boy from his grip and went back to his seat. "Conrad, you did well in his training so far but teach him that his curiosity sometimes must be controlled. I think it is time to start the training with the time turner as soon as you acquire his wand, this will help you make up the wasted time on that part of his schedule. I..." Suddenly the old man stopped in his speech for no apparent reason. "Blast it, of all days this fool has to come today for a visit."

Conrad eyed his father in law with worry. "Do you mean that Dumbledore is here? What would he want here anyways?" The thought of facing this man here was most unpleasant for Conrad. No

matter how small the chance, what would happen should Dumbledore recognize Alexander as Harry Potter would do no good.

"He does visit from time to time when he is bored or troubled, still clinging to the friendship we once had. You two must leave, now. You still have the jewels I gave you as portkeys some years ago Conrad?"

"Yes master, we always keep them with us just in case." Conrad took a small teardrop formed jewel from his pocket, showing it to the old wizard.

"Good leave now, we will talk another day. And do as I told you." Conrad simply nodded, holding his son close he uttered the portkeys password and they both disappeared, leaving Grindelwald alone to face Albus Dumbledore, for whatever reason the old man was here anyways.

A few moments later a knock on the door indicated the arrival of Albus Dumbledore. Without waiting for a response the aged wizard entered the room to face his former friend and once bitter rival. "Good day Gellert. I am not coming at a inconvenient time am I? " He played his role as benevolent old man well.

"No Albus. You are my only visitor so what do you think you could interrupt here. But I am wondering what gives me the honor of your sudden visit?" Gellert tried to keep his voice calm, but right now he was more then angered that the old man had cut short his grandsons first visit.

"Do I really need a reason to visit an old friend Gellert?" Dumbledore tried smile reassuringly.

"I would say no, but we are far from the good friends we have been in the past Albus. So no more babbling, why are you here?" Impatience was dripping from his every word as he eyed Dumbledore with distrust.

"So be it Gellert, have it your way. I am here for your help in a matter of great importance to me. I need your help and your knowledge of old blood magic and rituals."

"The mighty Albus Dumbledore seeks help from his beaten opponent? And he seeks to learn forbidden magic as well, magic you yourself played no small role in outlawing. Why do you seek such dangerous knowledge Albus?" This got Gellerts interest. What could Dumbledore expect to achieve with forbidden arts.

"Forbidden indeed, but that does not mean they aren't useful from time to time Gellert. Some of these spells can be used for good too you know. I seek a special spell in particular. A spell to find a hidden person." Dumbledores voice was calm while he was giving Gellert the look a teacher would give a student while admonishing him to see a subject for more then just its obvious uses.

"And pray tell me who is it you are searching for Albus?" Gellert was amused by this, he already had a hunch whom Dumbledore was trying to find with this spell, though Gellert knew that after a blood adoption even these spells would fail their purpose.

"A young boy, a boy abducted nearly five years ago. I promised his family to do everything in my power to find the child. Alas none of my attempts at finding him were successful so far. This is the last straw, the last possible way to find the boy." A bit of sadness could be seen in Dumbledores face as he talked about the lost boy-who-lived.

"A righteous cause for seeking such dark knowledge Albus. Though your followers would be quite disturbed knowing you seek such spells. But oh well, there is a spell you can use, but it will require the blood of the missing person, as long as you cannot provide it the spell will remain useless to you." By now Gellert was really enjoying this. Trampling the hopes of this foolish old man that had betrayed their dream was a great pleasure for him.

Dumbledores shoulders slumped as he heard the requirements for the spell. "Are you sure it has to be the blood of the person you seek? Won't blood from a close relative, like a twin suffice as well?"

"No Albus, it has to be the blood of the one you try to find or else the spell will only lead you to the relative whose blood you used." Now it was Gellert playing the role of the teacher.

Dumbledore heaved a sigh in defeat. Young Harry was truly lost to them now. He looked around the room until his eyes rested on

something that shocked him a bit. "Say Gellert is that your blood there on the floor?"

Gellert cringed inwardly, he had forgotten to remove Alexanders blood after he healed the wound. Dumbledore would grow suspicious now. "It is mine Albus, I cut myself with a knife not long before you arrived. I had time to heal the wound but not to clean the blood." Gellert was waiting whether his opponent believed the lie or not.

Dumbledore looked at his former friend, searching for the wound in question but found none, not even a drop of blood on Gellerts robes. "Say where did you cut yourself I can neither see a wound, scar or any blood on you from such a wound."

"Even though you try to forget it Albus I am still adept at wandless magic and especially healing spells are easily done without the need for a wand. And I cut my hand, that is why there is no blood on my robe Albus, stop hunting for shadows that don't even exist."

Dumbledore eyed the other man with a bit of distrust but let the topic drop in the end. Who else would have come here, there was no one else who could have bled unless Gellert attacked the house elf but that was most unlikely. The conversation went on a little longer, no more interesting things were spoken before Dumbledore left his former friend alone in his cell to repent for his sins.

When Conrad returned home, all hell broke lose. As soon as Selene saw the enlarged scar on her sons face she became more then just angry, hadn't there been Conrad and Martin, the latter still present as a guardian and trainer for Alex, Selene would have apparated to Nurmengard to yell at her father. But alas she stayed and fussed over he son, demanding an explanation of what had happened with her father.

When Conrad had finished his recounting of the meeting he had a better look at his sons new scar. It was only a thin line, but it would always remain as a reminder of the harsh teachings of Gellert Grindelwald. But to Conrads great interest the new scar had also changed the shape of Alexanders old scar on the forehead. The lightning bold was no longer distinguishable and was now part of twice as long scar down the boys forehead. He was wondering

whether his father in law had planed for it to hide his old scar or if it was really just an act of anger at the boys actions.

The following day Conrad went out to find the old wand crafter Gregorowitsch. Accompanied by his wife, son and their guard Martin they visited a small village just outside of Budapest. The old man was easier found then expected, he lived in a small manor in the outskirts of the village, alone and undisturbed for years. Conrad really hoped the old crafter harbored no grudge against the name Grindelwald. To his surprise the crafter welcomed them in his home without much fuss and so they sat in his study to talk about their reasons for coming.

"Well master Gregorowitsch as you know who sent us I assume you can already think of why we are here. We need a custom wand for our son that will not hinder his progress like the wands sold by the wand makers in the cities." Conrad tried to argue in his most polite voice, hoping not to anger the old crafter in any way.

"Yes I already thought as much. You know why I don't like the old Grindelwald though. But none the less I am still a crafter and after many years I want to create one last masterpiece before I leave this plane of existence. But your son will have to prove his worth first. The materials I want to use won't react to just anyone, so they either react to him or you will leave and let me go on in peace." The words of the old man were most unexpected. Conrad did not know whether he should be happy for the chance his son got or worried about just what materials the crafter wanted to use and which danger they could put his son in. Selene definitely opted for the latter and pulled her son closer.

The old wand crafter lead them down to the basement where he had his workshop. The room was filled with many kinds of strange devices and shelves filled with glasses and boxes, all labeled and sorted. The old man walked up to his work bench and picked up a box there. He walked over to Alexander and presented him the box. "This is a rare core for a wand my boy, this was once part of the heart of the last of the ancient dragons. His power is amazing but to this day this component has shown no reaction to anyone. To craft a last wand with this piece would be a fitting end for my life." With this he handed the box to the boy and Alex opened it to find a stick in there, not a real stick but a petrified heart string of a dragon. When

he touched it with his hand the string started to glow, much to the delight of the old crafter.

"Excellent, finally someone worthy of this piece. I will craft you a most magnificent wand with it. It won't be as strong as my masterpiece but it will certainly be a strong one." He took the box from the boy and placed it back on the workbench. Then he went to the boys parents to talk about the rest of the formalities for crafting the wand, like the cost and the time it will take to create it.

Alexander meanwhile roamed the workshop unattended, walking around until something caught his interest. A small piece of metal with a blood red jewel on top. He found it curious that such a pretty jewel was placed on a rather plain piece of metal. When he picked it up he found the metal oddly light, a kind of warmth radiating from it. Suddenly the metal changed its form, shocking the boy making him yelp a bit in surprise, getting him the attention of the adults in the room. Selene looked worriedly at her son, Conrad looked the same, but only because he had seen what his sons curiosity had brought him last time. The old crafter though mere chuckled at the surprise on the childs face.

"Ah yes. That is a special kind of metal boy. It is called Arcanite, it can changed its form more easily then any other material. A person adept in transfiguration could make almost anything out of it. The jewel has two purposes, one its a blood jewel, meaning once it made contact with your blood it will prevent all other persons from using it and that metal block. And second it acts as an amplifier for the metal to make it easier to change it. Creating this thing is rather easy but the magic used for it is considered dark by some fools and therefore this metal is almost forgotten by our society. "With another benevolent smile he turned back to the boys parents who were still a bit put off by what they had heard.

After a few more minutes of talking the family was ready to leave, the wand would be finished in one month and staying any longer would only interrupt the crafter while he began his work. The month they had to wait for the wand was almost unbearable for the young boy. Hearing about the importance of his magical education from his grandfather got the boy all excited about learning his first magic skills, much to the dismay of his mother who still believed him to young for such studies.

At the end of the month Conrad and Alexander went to pick up the wand from the old crafter, Selene had decided against coming along, the sight of some of the crafters materials on his shelves almost turned her stomach the last time so she would not test it a second time.

Gregorowitsch again greeted him with a little to much enthusiasm, something about him just seemed off. His friendliness despite what Alexanders grandfather had done to him seemed to be an awfully bad played role. But none the less he kept his word and presented them with the wand, his last creation and one of his finest on top. The wand was of a grayish almost white color.

"I made this wand not with wood but with a far more powerful material. The shaft of the wand is made of dragon-bone, the bone was from the same dragon as the heart string that works as its core now. Both materials together make a powerful combination, be careful young one." Then he turned to Conrad. "Watch out for the kid, the wand may be too much for a boy so young to handle at the moment. But he will find it benefiting to grow up with its power."

Conrad looked with awe at his sons wand, listening intently to what the old crafter had told him. Alexander seemed almost jumpy from happiness. Now he would finally learn magic.

"One more thing." Gregorowitsch turned around and took something from his workbench. In his hand he had the Arcanite piece Alexander had in his hand during the last visit. "I will give you this as well boy. Maybe you will find a better use and return this forgotten material back to the place it belongs." He took a small knife from the bench and gave it to the boy."Cut your palm and let a few drops of blood drop onto the jewel that is embedded to the metal. This way this Arcanite will be bound to you and you alone."

Alexander looked unsure towards his father. He was not too keen on getting cut again after what his grandfather did to him as punishment. But his father merely nodded at his son to follow the wand crafters command and so the boy complied. He winced when the sharp blade pierced his skin, warm blood flowing through the cut. The old crafter took the boys wrist and put the bleeding hand on the jewel and the arcanite. The stone seemed to drink the blood, in mere seconds the blood from his hand was gone, only the cut remained, but it had stopped bleeding by now. From the loss of blood the boy

felt light headed and seemed a bit pale, but the old crafter simply smiled encouragingly at the boy.

"Now my boy you need to channel your magic into the metal and change its form into whatever you want it to be when you carry it with you." The old man let go of the metal so it now rested solely in the boys hand. After some hesitation the boy tried to focus his magic, though his lack of training made this a hard trick for him. His weakened state after loosing blood to the jewel did nothing to make this whole thing easier but in the end the boy succeeded after some minutes and the metal changed its form, glowing brightly in the process. When the glowing stopped the metal had become a bracer covering the right wrist of the boy, the blood jewel resting on top of it, making it look like an expensive piece of clothing.

"Excellent my boy. This will surely help you on your way." Gregorowitsch patted the boy on the head and went back to his workbench to return the knife to its place. Conrad finally had found himself able to talk, awe and curiosity about what would happen had hindered him before.

"Tell me Mr Gregorowitsch why is it that you seem so willing to help us? We know of what the boys grandfather did to you, how he stole your greatest creation. Why are you helping us like this?" Conrad had to keep calm, the question was troubling him since their first meeting a month ago and now that he finally asked it he almost did it with a force the old man would have found most rude.

"Don't be foolish. It is not you I help, but the boy. A child is not responsible for his forefathers actions and I have a feeling this boy will one day become great. He may succeed were others have failed but he will need all help he can get. I merely extend my help to the boy, but never believe I help or serve you or your master." A piercing cold entered the voice of the old man when he talked about Grindelwald. His face showing anger, probably held back for a long time. "Go know and do not return here. This is all I can do for the boy, my work in this world is done." He waved them away and Conrad waited no longer. He took his son, helping the boy since he still felt dizzy from the blood loss. They quickly left the building and Conrad apparated them home at once.

The next few months went by in a rush. With the beginning of his magical training young Alexander rarely found a moment to be lazy.

His grandfather had set a harsh training regimen for his heir and now all the boy could do would be to endure it. In his rare free moments Alexander experimented with the Arcanite he had, trying to mold it into another form, but so far he only had little success. Like this his life went on for another 2 years, his father gradually reporting the boys progress to his master. Alexander himself never accompanied his father on that trips again, his mother held him back whenever he tried to tag along. Selene still held a grudge against her father for hurting her boy during their first meeting, but Alexander saw it as nothing of great concern. He felt more respect for the old wizard, but no fear, his grandfather would punish fear and that was the last thing the boy wanted.

Seeing the boys progress his parents soon started using the time turner they had acquired from an old friend of Gellert Grindelwald. With its help the boys growth was doubled but at the price of his age. Though he learned in two years the same he otherwise would have learned in four he also age twice as fast during this training period.

After just two years the former six year old boy had aged to a ten year old, only one year away from starting his 'true' schooling at Durmstrang, the school his father and grandfather had attended before him. During his hard training the boy had quickly grasped the basics of the magical disciplines. Transfiguration, Charms, Healing and combat magic, more commonly known as dark magic, had become part of his everyday life. In some of the topics he had already advance on a more then intermediate level of skill, especially in combat magic, where the boy utilized his physical training to gain benefits in duels against his trainers.

After gaining more insight on transfiguration the boy had also succeeded in transforming his Arcanite bracer in more useful items. His favorite was a silver-gray sword he created from the Arcanite. A truly beautiful weapon with the blood jewel as ornament on the hilt, his first weapon of choice in a non magic battle. Pleased with the boys impressive progress Grindelwald demanded his grandsons presence the next time his father would come to report. It was time for the next step in the plan of the old wizard, the boy was finally ready to step out of the shadows and strike fear into his enemies hearts.

Its been just little more then two years since Alexander had last visited his grandfather. His only visit had caused him a scar, this

time he would not be so foolish and act the way his grandfather expected him to. The dark tower of Nurmengard was just the way the boy remembered it. But this time the menacing presence of the building had a different effect on the boy. He would not let it intimidate him again, this time he would brave his bad feelings of this place.

When they reached the top of the tower they found the old wizard the same way Alexander had seen him last. Sitting on his chair near the window, a book on his lap the old man greeted them with an emotionless voice, not showing any reaction to them, though Alexander thought he had seen a hint of pride in the eyes of the old man when he saw his heir.

"So you have finally come again Alexander. You have grown. Your father had me informed of all of your progress during your training and I must say I am most pleased with how you handled yourself during these hard years." For a moment Alex felt pride welling up inside of him before his grandfather continued. "But you are not the man you need to be yet. You are still a boy, a innocent little child that knows nothing of this world." The last part was said in a cold and uncaring voice.

"I have learned all I can during my training, whatever there is I will face it." Almost arrogantly the boy looked at his grandfather but the old man remained impassive by this show of immaturity.

"A fool you are. Young and foolish, but I guess it can't be helped at the moment. With the years you will gain more insight on this world you live in. Until then all we can do is prepare you for the time you truly need to make decision that will affect more than just your own fate." The old man looked at his heir with a bit of contempt.

"We will have him prepared for anything that will stand in his way master. He will be ready." Conrad was sure his son would not disappoint them.

"We will see that Conrad. In one year time the boy will go to Durmstrang, the school has changed since I visited it, the competition for power there is bigger then ever. I need the boy to rule there and not be ruled by anyone. But first we will show this world that there is a Grindelwald out there, rising to power and they can't do anything about it." A cruel smirk appeared on the old

wizards face. "And I know just the way the boy can proof himself to the world. It will also be his baptism of fire. I hope you are prepared boy, now we will see whether you are truly ready to face this cruel world." A cold chuckle escaped the old man and both Conrad and Alexander couldn't help but feel a bit disturbed by the sound of it. Whatever the old man had planed, it would be dangerous, very dangerous for the boy. All they could do now was wait.

So the second chapter ends here. I am not sure whether this end counts as a cliffhanger or not but I wish to express that I had not intended it to be that way. But this was the best way to separate this chapter and the following in a logical way. The third chapter will come soon and the title will be 'Baptism of Fire'. no big surprise here I guess.

Oh well, till next time. And please leave a review.

Chapter3: Baptism of Fire

It was a cold winter day as Alexander found himself on a mountain path in the french Alps. Despite using self heating charms he still felt the cold creeping up inside of him and he couldn't suppress a shudder from time to time. This was his first real mission for his grandfather and the old wizard wasted no time to show his grandson how bad some business can go. The first mission already was a kill on sight job. A group of Veela had betrayed his grandfather, in exchange for information they were supposed to be paid handsomely but during the exchange they had changed their minds and taken both the scrolls with the information and the payment with them. Though Alex had no idea what the information was about he knew that it must be important considering his grandfather send him and four others to find and kill those Veela.

To his right side Conrad was berating Alexander about the dangers of the magical creatures called Veela. The man was worried about his sons well being. In his mind ten years were just barely enough to see a fight, but not even close taking part in it. But alas his master had different plans for his heir. After this mission Alexander would be presented to the world, the years of hiding him finally over. But before that could be done the boy had to proof he could fight well enough to protect himself from threats hence this is why they are currently here with the hunting party.

After tracing the fleeing Veela for several days they finally where successful in pinpointing their location. A large building hidden on a difficult to access side of the mountain, that is where they have been hiding all along. Their numbers they could only guess. More then five that is for sure but there could be many more there, making the situation difficult to control. They had taken three of their strongest allies with them to this mission, hoping this would be enough to survive this but a small bit of uncertainty of the whole thing remained.

It was late night when they arrived near the house, everything quiet, no light or any movement could be seen from the house. They moved closer as nothing seemed out of the ordinary. The quiet though was almost unnerving. It was as if nature itself was holding its breath, no wind, no sounds of the surrounding trees or anything else. Just the sound of their boots crunching the the snow under their feet. An almost foreboding silence. Alexander looked at the house intently, studying its structure. The first lesson about tactic he

had learned was to always use your surrounding to your full advantage. But the house showed no such thing as any advantage in battle. Should their enemies see them coming they had little cover while the Veela would be protected inside the house. A most troubling thought. Then he saw a shadow moving on the roof. For a second he could have sworn there was something sitting in wait for them. He nudged his father and gestured for him to look at the roof, trying to do so without anyone seeing that he may have seen the enemy hiding on the building.

They came closer, ten more meters and they were at the house. They all had their wands drawn by now. Suddenly the oppressive silence was pierced by a high pitched shriek as suddenly two bird like monsters dropped onto them from above, fire blazing in their claws. A third came from the house, a fireball shot down towards Alex and his father, both jumping out of its way while their allies opened fire at the monsters. When Alex got up again he could see curses and fireballs flying around as both sides had started fighting all out. He saw one of the avian beasts cut down from the air by a strong cutting hex, but there were two more remaining now. He heard the taunts from one of their men towards the avian monsters, the man tried to anger them so they got careless but the Veela ignored him. One of their men got wounded by the claws of one of the monsters before they could kill it, a large bleeding gash adorning his side now, the man cursing out loudly.

When Alex saw one of the beasts coming down towards his fathers location, the man just getting up from jumping out of a fireballs way, he reacted by throwing bludgeon hexes at the enemy. Most missed, but it distracted the beast so it stopped its attack towards the man and refocused on the boy instead. Throwing a huge fireball at the boy, the monster rushed towards him. Alex erected a shield to stop the fireball, but on impact he was sent back flying a few meters, losing his wand in the process. The beast came closer at a fast rate, shrieking loudly. When it raised its claw to cut down the boy all seemed lost.

Time slowed down, Alex heard his father screaming his name from afar. But Alex was not ready to die yet. He focused his magic into the bracer on his wrist, transfiguring it into his sword, impaling the surprised beast on it. Warm blood spilled on Alex face as the beast stood there motionless, his sword still running through the avian monsters chest. But then to his shock the facial features of the

creature morphed and suddenly he looked into the face of a young woman, a mere teenager staring at him with expressionless eyes. As he retracted his sword the dead body hit the ground at his feet, Alex still shocked about what had happened. He had killed, not some monster but a girl, she seemed human now where she was a monster only moments before.

Conrad saw what his son did from afar. He was shocked, fearing for his sons life but then he saw how his son seemingly remain calm and kill the beast. A bit of pride welled up inside him but then he saw his sons face daubed in the blood of his opponent, a shocked expression on his face. Conrad wanted to hurry over to his son but one of his allies beat him to it.

Fedor Kasakow, a hulking man stepped towards the boy, handing him his lost wand, patting him a bit more rough then necessary on the shoulder while saying, "Finally boy you have seen your first blood, now you are a real man. Be proud of yourself." His smirk never disappearing despite the boys missing reaction to his words. "Now come we have to check the house there are bound to be more monsters to slay in there." With a barking laugh he turned around and walked towards the house followed by the other two men that had come with them.

The boy finally snapped out of his stupor and followed the man towards the house, looking at the dead girl one more time before he carried on as if nothing had happened. His father followed him, worried for his sons sanity. His master must be truly cruel to have a child kill at such an age, but it was not Conrads place to judge the old wizard so he followed his son silently to the house.

Three Veela had been slain outside, meaning there must be at least two more inside. With caution they entered the house, looking around in the dark main hall of the building. "We split up to search the building, don't screw up and die here guys." Fedor seemed more tense then moments ago outside the building. Conrad kept close to his son while Alex went up the stairs to check the upper rooms together with Fedor. The first few rooms were empty. The beds untouched as if no one has been here for years. The constant darkness was unnerving but coupled with the tension at the moment it became almost unbearable to be in this house.

Another shriek shattered the silence, downstairs the men had found two more Veela in hiding. The monsters attacked as soon as the men were in sight, but were disposed of easily as their flying form were more hindering inside a small room then helping, like they would have in an open field. Five down but god knows how many more are here Alex thought to himself. He approached another door, another sleeping room. The door opened with a groan and revealed another seemingly empty bedroom. But the bed here seem to have been in use until recently so Alex entered the room to investigate it more closely.

As he stepped towards the bed he placed a hand on the disheveled bedding. "Still warm, someone must be here" He murmured silently to himself, looking around more tensely then even before. Another monster was here, hiding from him waiting for an opening to kill him, but he would not be beaten here. He looked around more carefully, taking in every corner of the room, from the floor to the ceiling. Nothing. There was nothing in this room, he settled for the thought that the former owner of this room must have been one of the three monsters outside and went to leave.

When he had reached the door to leave the room he suddenly heard a rustling from the wardrobe. He instantly stopped in his track and turned around towards the closet. His breathing became ragged as he slowly approached the wardrobe. He opened the door of the wardrobe with his left hand in haste, holding his wand tightly in his right. With a loud thud another person fell out of the cramped wardrobe, directly to Alexanders feet. It was a young girl, from the looks not much older then him, her eyes filled with horror as she saw the bloodstained boy with his wand directed at her. She started squirming, trying to get up, but she couldn't as Alex stood to close, leaving her no room to properly turn around. Tears suddenly formed in her eyes as she started pleading 'Don't kill, don't kill'. The girls voice was hysteric, high pitched, her thick french accent making the words sound like the shriek of a banshee. She pleaded more to her captor, though as it seemed she only knew few words of her captors language, not enough to properly communicate. But there was something about her pleading that captivated Alexander. Her voice died away, now a mere whisper she repeated only 'don't kill, me serve don't kill'.

The sounds from the room had also gotten the attention of Conrad and Fedor, both men appearing in the door shortly after Alex

happened upon the girl. Conrad looked at the scene with astonishment, but Fedor let out a cold snort before he leveled his wand at the girl, ready to kill her with a hex.

"Don't" Alexander's sudden command shocked all in the room, both Fedor and Conrad, as well as the girl. "She is not one of those bird monsters. She means us no harm she is just a child." He looked back down at the girl to his feet, she was still looking at him with great fear in her eyes.

"This is a trick boy. They all look like this from time to time to fool us normal men. The moment you turn your back at her she will transform and rip your spine out, better have her killed before that don't you think boy." Fedor was angry, not understanding why the boy wanted to prevent him from killing her, just another monster, nothing out of the ordinary. But the boy did not move an inch from his place, shielding the girl from Fedor so he couldn't hex her.

"She is not a monster. She may be a Veela as well but look at her, she is too young to transform. In all I have learned about them in my studies of magical creatures it was a stated fact that they can't transform before their adolescence." Alexander glared daggers at Fedor, before he turned to the girl trying to calm her down. "Don't worry no one will kill you. Everything will be alright." He placed a hand on her shoulder with the intention to reassure her, but she squirmed under his touch, fearing he would try to harm her.

"Don't be such a fool boy, she must have bewitched you, she must be..." Fedor's rant would have continued hadn't Conrad interrupted him with a hand on his shoulder and words that made the man even more angry. "Leave now Fedor, continue your search through the house for other monsters, I will take care of things here." Fedor was fuming in anger, but left the room none the less. He would not give their master a reason to punish any insubordination.

Conrad took a few steps towards his son and the cowering girl on the floor. "Now what will we do with this girl Alex? Fedor is right she is a Veela as well and she is not trustworthy at the moment." He looked at the girl on the floor with pity. He guessed her around the same age as his son, a mere child. To kill a child was one of the sins Conrad had sworn never to commit. The girl was still silently repeating her pleading like a chant, tears rolling down her face.

"Father we have to help her, she is no fighter, no monster like the others. To kill her would not be right." he looked at his father seeking for guidance in this situation before he looked back at the girl. "I will not let any of you harm her, father." He said this with a conviction that surprised his father, never before had his son talked to him in this manner, but he knew this was exactly what they wanted him to act like. His grandfather wanted him to be strong, to make decisions and enforce them no matter what opposition as long as the decision held any merit.

His father resigned to follow his sons will on this, though he would keep an close eye on that girl. "Now what Alex? What will we do with her? Leave her here, alone among the dead bodies of those that might have been her family and friends?" Conrads voice was sneering, he wanted to challenge his son to bring this all to a closure by himself.

"I really don't know. We cannot leave her here, that's for sure. But to take her with us won't be easy either. As it seems she can only speak french properly, this will be a difficult task." He fell silent for some moments before he shook his head slightly."We may have to leave her here despite my resentment to such actions. Maybe we can anonymously inform someone to come and get her... Yes, that might be the best." He did not like it but he had to leave the girl here, alone among the dead. He was about to stand up when he was held back by the girls hand gripping his jacket tightly, looking at him from her position on the floor with fearful eyes.

"Me serve, don't kill, don't leave here." She pleaded between sobs, though her tears had nearly stopped flowing by now. "Me serve. Me swear not betray you. Me swear on life." Though her wording was far from correct the effect was immediate. A white light came from the girl and shot towards Alex, making the girls oath binding.

"Shit, now we have a real problem at hand my son." Conrad couldn't believe what had happened just now. This frightened Veela child had bound itself to his son as his servant for the rest of his life. A oath that can only end with her death. Now they would have to bring her along. Conrad sighed, this would require an awful lot of explaining to the others of their group. But there was no helping it now, maybe his master would know a way to make the best out of this situation.

"Father, what has happened? What was that light about?" Alex seemed perplex, staring back and forth between the girl and his father.

"She has sworn an oath to serve you for the rest of her life. Should she break this oath she would die, how she could perform such a thing I don not know. We know too little about Veela magic to be sure but the signs were unmistakeable." Conrad looked at the girl, by now she sat upright, seeming more calm then before. She had resigned to her fate and was now only awaiting what would happen to her, knowing she could no longer change her fate. "We will have to take her with us. As it seems you have a companion now, Alex."

Alex was silent for some moments before he stood up to leave the room. The girl did not hesitate to follow him, silently watching his every action. Alex slowly shook his head, this would need some time getting used to. When they got downstairs they met the rest of their companions, they had cleared out the house but were unable to obtain the information they were seeking for. At least they got the Veela that had cheated them, though they all looked at the young girl that followed Alex with much suspicion. Even after an explanation from Conrad they were still wary of the girl. Especially Fedor had a look of pure disgust on his face when he heard that the girl had bound herself to the boy by an oath. But none the less they all had to except things as they were for now.

A short time later they left the place, going home after a hard job completed. For most of them it was just another job, for Alex it was the first time he had spilled blood and taken a life. This alone would have changed his life from there onward but now the boy also had his first real companion, a change that would influence the rest of his life.

I know it is short, but for this story I have decided to go with short chapters and more updates.

I have tried to present a different side to the Veela. In most stories they are only portrayed as beautiful women with a charm to seduce men, but they also have the monstrous side to them. Their avian form, like a harpy which also is a part of their being as magical creatures. But this more animalistic side is rarely shown in fan fiction so I chose them here.

Oh well till next time and please leave a review, I really appreciate advice on how to improve the story.

Chapter4: Lines drawn

When Alex and his father returned back home with their new companion a lot of commotion was caused as Selene first saw her bloodstained son and moments later a rather frightened young girl walking behind him, apparently trying to disappear in his shadow. Conrad tried to explain what had happened not long before they got home, but Selene was too busy fussing about the children to pay

attention to her husband. Only when he got to the point concerning the young girl Selene listened up, intent on knowing why exactly the child was here. To say Selene was displeased with the situation would have been an understatement. What they had put both children through that night was unacceptable, once more Selene was hard pressed to understand her fathers reasoning.

Once the whole situation was explained, Conrad went to leave again, intent on reporting the missions outcome directly to his master and to ask for orders regarding the Veela girl that was now following his son everywhere he went. Hearing that the girls family was most likely dead Selene had taken the girl under her wing for now. One of the benefits of Selenes education at Beauxbatons was definitely her ability to speak French and making her the first to be able to actually communicate with the young girl.

When Conrad arrived at Nurmengard darkness had already fallen on everything. The sea surrounding the towering prison was pitch black and seemed awfully calm in comparison to what it normally looks like in broad daylight. The tower itself was equally dark, it was almost maddening to climb up the stairs to the top and Conrad couldn't stop himself from wondering how anyone could live here and remain sane. But his master was not ordinary, far from it.

As soon as Conrad had knocked on his masters door it opened with a screeching sound, revealing the old man sitting on the edge of his bed, looking intently at his late night visitor.

"I do hope for you that the reason for your visit is important Conrad, I do not take lightly to disturbances so late at night." The expression on the old mans face was unreadable. Was he angry? Curious? Whatever it was it unnerved Conrad a great deal.

Conrad gulped slightly. There was no turning back now, he better get straight to the point. "Yes master. I am here to report on our last mission." He waited a moment for a reaction from the man, but to avail so he continued. "We were finally able to track the Veela we have been searching for. We were able to kill them but the information they were supposed to deliver were nowhere to be found." This finally got a rise out of the old man.

"That is most unfortunate. We have to speed up another part of the plan for now. The boy will be presented to our remaining allies and the wizarding world in a short while, prepare for that. I would have rather waited with it until he leaves for Durmstrang, but we cannot be sure how much information has already been leaked out, I will take no risks concerning my heir." The impassive look on the wizard's face seemed like a mockery, considering his usual moods should one of his plans fail.

"You believe we have a traitor amongst our ranks master?" Conrad was disturbed by the thought of anyone of their own men to betray their cause.

"No Conrad. Not a traitor. But enough foolish goons that drink too much and start bragging to impress easy women." The last part was spoke with disgust, the old Grindelwald despised men that were unable to control their urges. But alas he still needed those goons, they were good muscle and supported their cause almost zealously. When the old man looked at his son-in-law he saw the troubled look remaining in his eyes. "Is there anything else you wish to report to me Conrad?"

"Yes master. During our mission we encountered an... unpredictable problem, involving Alexander." This got him a raised eyebrow from the old man. "One of the Veela, a young girl, probably around Alexander's age was among the Veela we fought against."

"And why is that a problem? Did Alexander kill the child and feel remorse now? I thought you taught him better, to kill a monster is no act you should feel sorry about." The old man's words were cold, uncaring. He had a fixed image of what his heir should be like and would do anything to groom Alexander for this way of life.

"No master. He killed a Veela, but not the young girl. He actually stopped us from doing anything to her, her pitiful display of fear

moved him to protect her from us. Because of that the girl bound herself to him with an oath to serve him till her death."

This caught the old mans interest."Oath bound you say? Hm this could be actually worth something." The old man fell silent again, a contemplative look on his face. "Yes this will definitely be a beneficial thing for my heir. A wizards oath is worth nothing unless it is an unbreakable oath but for Veela it is different. This foolish race would honor their oaths even should you tell them to kill their own children, yes she will be a loyal servant for my heir." He got a gleeful look on his face.

"So what shall we do with her master?" Conrad felt rather unwell in the presence of the old Grindelwald as long as he had that particular look on his face. It often meant bad news for all involved.

"Conrad I order you to have that girl trained and taken care of. She shall enter Durmstrang with my heir as his aide, to support him during his mission there. Have her prepared properly do you understand?" The commanding tone was undeniable. Conrad could only nod to show he understood his orders. "Good. Now leave I wish to retire for the night. Also prepare the meeting with our allies to present my heir to them. No go."

Not waiting for anymore words from his master Conrad quickly left the room and Nurmengard, wondering what the old man had planned for his son that he would need an unconditionally loyal servant at Durmstrang.

As Alex returned from showering and changing his clothes he found his mother still talking to the girl that was now bound to him. For the first time he took a moment to watch the girl. Her white blond hair was bound back in a shoulder length braid to keep the hair from her face, though some strands of hair still escaped the braid so she had to sweep them away from her grayish eyes all the time. She had a pretty face, Alex had to admit that, but that is after all what Veela are. Pretty faces to hide their more deadly and animalistic side. The girl seemed more calm now, to finally have someone speaking the same language seemed to help her cope with the situation immensely. Well it helped her but Alex still felt a bit wary of this situation, Fedors warning about Veela still ringing in his ears.

Despite his worries at the moment Alex stepped a bit closer, trying to hear what his mother was telling the girl. When he was younger his mother tried to teach him French but Alex somehow never really wished to learn it, having to learn Russian for his later school life as well as English had already been taxing on the boy and another language never really got his interest. Now he wished he had learned that language as he understood nothing his mother and the girl were talking about.

"Ah Alex, good that you decided to join us. Elena is a really interesting girl, once the two of you can speak the same language you will find her company most pleasant." His mother gave him a small smile, though the tone of her voice gave away that she disapproved with her sons actions that night. But never would she take it out on the innocent girl or her son. Selene had another person she could blame for all this. As always when bad things happened to Alexander, her father would be the person to blame as he is always involved one way or another.

"Elena? So that is her name. That makes things easier then to call her girl or Veela all the time I guess. But what now mother? What are we gonna do with her?" Alex had no idea what to do at this moment, he knew the girl... Elena would not leave his side for quite some time now and somehow that unnerved him greatly.

"What are WE gonna do? She is your responsibility as she has sworn the oath to you my son. What is it you want to do with her?" So this was his mothers intention. She wanted to see what he would do when other peoples fate depended on him.

"If I grasped the whole oath concept correctly then there is no choice but to keep her here. She will have to learn our language as well as the others I know so she can attend school with me, seeing she would not stay here alone for an entire year. I guess... oh well unless we find a way to lift the oath it will be necessary to train her as well, she will have to face the same dangers as I will and I can't have her become a liability." Alex took a deep breath, awaiting whatever his mother would have to tell him. Berate him, question his intentions or agree with him, whatever it would be he prepared himself mentally for it. But to his surprise it was not his mother that spoke next, but his father, who had entered the room moments before.

"You are correct son. Your grandfather also thought among that lines and has already ordered that we train her to become your aide. Veela oaths are much more serious then those of humans. A Veela would never back out of an oath even if you give her the choice to do so. You two are stuck together from now on so we will have to prepare her. Things will get hectic from now on, even without her. Be prepared son, you will soon be the center of some unwanted attention." Conrad looked first at his son, then to his wife who sported a worried look. He would explain to her what he meant once the children were in bed.

Few more arrangements were discussed. The girl, ten year old Veela Elena Dupont would life with them from now on, train with him in all the aspects he is trained. Though she would need a lot of time to catch on to his level she would already be a valuable aide to him in his first year at Durmstrang. The children were soon sent to bed, Elena getting one of their guest rooms as her own. Conrad and Selene still sat in the houses study, soon joined by their guard and family friend Martin discussing the changes that were about to come to their lives.

Albus Dumbledore was not having a good day. No not at all. Today he got hold of some news that shocked him deeply. Cursing his own blindness he called some of his closest supporters for a special meeting in his office at Hogwarts. The school had just filled with life again after the end of the Christmas break oblivious to the growing problems outside of the schools safe halls.

The office was filled with a small assortment of Dumbledores most trusted. Among them James Potter, Sirius Black, Severus Snape, the Weasleys and 'Madeye' Moody. "Good day my friends. I know you are all curious as to why I called you here on such short notice, but I fear a new problem has arisen while we were lazy after the dark lords downfall. Two days ago in the middle of the night there has been a raid on a household of Veela somewhere in the french Alps. All the Veela in the house were killed most brutally as I have been told. But what is most disturbing is that the crime was attributed to a group of wizards from Germany and eastern Europe. Among their numbers was a young man that they have identified as the heir of one Gellert Grindelwald. We have no idea as to why they had killed the Veela but if the rumor of an heir to the former Dark Lord is true we may face a new crisis very soon. Though more then forty years have passed since his downfall the old man Grindelwald

still casts his shadow upon us all I fear." None interrupted the old mans monologue, many of them looked in shock at the words from their esteemed leader.

"How can this be Albus? I thought Grindelwald is locked away safely in his own prison, how can he have an heir now when he had no children the day you locked him up there?" Moody was as always suspicious of any information.

"That is correct, Grindelwald had no family, no children when he was placed in the prison he still resides in." Dumbledore himself had pondered this thoughts a lot. Had his old friend really kept something like a family from him for so many years?

"Then this whole thing might as well be a ruse, an attempt of a small group of fanatics trying to play big by claiming things not their own." Snapes every word was filled with contempt, to him there was only one real dark lord that threatened their lives and may still linger somewhere waiting for his return.

"Be it as it may I will henceforth try to locate this so called heir and find out the truth for our all safety. I wish to warn you all to be on your guard from now on, Darkness still lingers out there." With these words most of the persons present left the room, with the exception of James Potter who was held back by Dumbledore.

"James I also want to advice you to start seriously training your daughter, she may be in danger as well and I don't want to take any risks with young Rose. Protect her well my boy." He gave James a grandfatherly smile before he dismissed him as well to start his search for his old friends heir.

Six months passed by in no time. With Alex training continuing without delay, Elena had to endure a even harder training regimen then Alex before her. Still she put up with it and quickly picked up the basics of the training the boy had gone through for years now. With Selene tutoring her Elena quickly learned the languages she needed to communicate with those around her. Despite her still heavy accent her new found ability to properly talk to Alex made it easier for both to get along fine. On Alex behest they even got her the same kind of Arcanite he had himself. The old man Gregorowitsch had not lied when he said it was easily made. It was ridiculous to them that they actually outlawed this material as its

benefits were indisputable. For her the Arcanite had the from a delicate bracelet around her wrist. It took Elena a long time to finally force the metal into another form thought it was not a sword like it was for Alex but for her the weapon she got was a rapier, a slim and graceful weapon befitting the young girl.

With time passing more and more of their allies also started to trust the young Veela more. Seeing her act around the heir of their master assured most that there really was an oath and that she would not betray the young Grindelwald. The only exception still was Fedor Kasakow. His open dislike for the girl was never hidden, though he kept his animosity towards her to himself as long as they were in the company of others.

Still most of their time passed peaceful as Alexanders grandfather had no more missions for his grandson at the moment, pressing the issue of the boys training for Durmstrang as more important then actually getting deeper involved in their plans at the moment.

During a major meeting in June Alexander was finally presented to the majority of the old Grindelwalds supporters. This day also marked Alexanders eleventh birthday, the day itself chosen by his parents many years ago as part of Alex new identity.. Many people were present, from many different countries. Even some supposedly neutral families from Britain were at the meeting, looking at their masters heir in awe. It was a day filled with happiness for those who believed in the cause of Grindelwald, they had a leader for the future, someone who would one day even surpass Gellert Grindelwald given the chance.

Only one thing ruined the mood that day. The arrival of one Albus Dumbledore and a small group of his vigilantes. The British supporters of Gellert Grindelwald barely managed to leave the gathering unseen, their identities needed to remain hidden for the moment, but the rest looked none to kindly to the unwanted party crashers. Dumbledore alas did not let this deter him, with a purposeful stride he quickly marched toward those he had managed to identify as the family and descendents of his former friend.

"What do you want here, Dumbledore? We have no business with you and your ilk." Conrad could not conceal his dislike for the old man, stories of Dumbledores betrayal to his master had long since given him a really bad impression of the man. And now his

interruption of the party and his self confident smirk really contributed to this dislike.

"No need for such animosity Mr. Jaeger. I am merely here to see that everything is in order with the grandson of a once powerful ... and dangerous man. We cannot have another dark lord rising as long as we can still prevent it." Feeling safe in his role of the benevolent old man Dumbledore made a step towards the young boy that stood nearby with a girl his age. The boys glare though somehow troubled Dumbledore. He couldn't have the boy hate him, he wanted the boy to trust him so he can groom him to be an upstanding member of society following his own ideals.

"Hello young boy. I can already see you know who I am. Why don't you come over so we can talk more privately, I am sure you will find it beneficial." He smiled at the young boy like a grandfather to his favorite grandson. But Alex remained unmoved, still glaring at him. This was when Dumbledore made another step towards the boy, a mistake as he had to learn a moment later. Suddenly the boy held a sword in his hand, pointing it in Dumbledores direction, but not just the boy, also the small girl at his side had a weapon in his hand, ready to defend the boy should Dumbledore move any closer.

"I guess you should better leave now Mr Dumbledore. My son certainly does not want to speak with you and your actions here can easily land you in prison should you not back down this instant." A blonde woman came up from behind the children, placing a hand on each childs shoulder.

"Ah and you must be Gellerts daughter, Selene. It is a pleasure to meet you. I can really assure you I am only here for the well being of the boy. He has to shoulder the burden of a great name and must be protected from the wrong influences."

"And pray what influences are you playing at, Dumbledore." Conrad could hardly restrain himself and spat the words with so much venom even his wife looked at him worriedly.

"I mean those influences that take a ten year old boy to a raid where he is faced with murder and carnage, Mr Jaeger. Your son is not safe in your care that much is sure. He will be safer under my guidance." This was Dumbledores second mistake. Suddenly he and his followers were facing many wands from angry guests, every

single one of them ready to face the consequences of fighting Albus Dumbledore here and now.

"You should better leave now Mr Dumbledore. This will have consequences I can assure you. Our son is more than protected among his loving family and friends and we will not surrender him to people like you so you can poison his mind with your lies of a black and white world where everyone not on your side is an enemy." Even Selene was irate now. Usually she was a calm person but this man just threatened to take away her son and that she would never accept from anyone, not even her own father.

"Even should he stay with his family I must demand he will at least be sent to Hogwarts for his education where we can assure he will be taught the correct subjects." By now even Albus Dumbledore should have grasped the concept of being outnumbered, outgunned and completely powerless.

"No such thing will happen. My son has already been accepted to Durmstrang and will start his education there later this year. I warn you now Dumbledore. We have the support of the Ministries from several European countries and should you ever approach our son in this manner again or try to take him away by force you will regret it. Among our guests today are the ministers of magic from Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy, Poland and Bulgaria so should you try anything your entire nation will have to face a bigger threat than a puny dark lord like your Voldemort. Leave now, you have been warned." Conrad yelled at the old wizard at the top of his lungs. When he spoke of the present politicians, the mentioned men stepped forward to show their support for the family.

Dumbledores shoulders slumped in defeat. His plans for the boy had already been shot down before he even got to play out half of his cards. But he could not risk an international crisis over one boy and as it seemed the boy was well protected here. All he could do now was to retreat and prepare his followers for the worst, though he hoped the young boy would not follow his grandfathers dark path.

The sudden appearance of Albus Dumbledore changed many things for the young heir of Gellert Grindelwald. Where he lived hidden from society until now he suddenly was drawn to the spotlight, many people now watching him with great interest. No doubt Dumbledore was behind this, trying to keep an eye on the boy this way and

possibly keep him out of any dark proceedings as he was constantly watched. This attention unnerved the young boy greatly, though at a later visit his grandfather admonished him to use this to his benefit. Constant press also meant the constant ability to impose your own beliefs on a wider spectrum of people, as long as one understood how to do this. Everything happened as the old wizard had planned it. Now only a few more weeks were left before the boy would start his schooling, a time he would have to use to gain more followers from the ranks of the impressionable children at the school.

So, another chapter finished. The scene with the politicians was not meant to make the followers of Grindelwald look more powerful but I intended it rather to show that the support for Grindelwald's cause still runs deep within some countries he was once active in. With this the 'prologue' has come to an end and the main part of the story will start. Next chapter Alex and Elena will finally leave for Durmstrang to begin their official education. Well I hope this gives something for all of you to look forward to.

So again, please leave a review with your opinion and things you think I should improve.

Chapter5: Ambition

One more week. Just one more week and the new term would start at Durmstrang. For Alexander and Elena it would be their first year at the school and both were quite excited by now. Especially Alex was looking forward to this, it would also be his first time that he would be able to act on his own without the constant watch of his parents. He had already formed many plans, but to succeed he would also need information. Information on the school, information on the teaching staff and especially information on the other students there. Thankfully his thirst for such knowledge could easily be satisfied and so he currently sat in the study of his families house with Elena, reading files, planing on how to approach certain students and teachers. Elena by now had become a quite useful companion to him, her constant strife to aid him in whatever he did made many things much easier and the suspicion Alex once held for the girl diminished more and more.

"Seems like there will be only two dozen other students starting at Durmstrang with us this year Elena. This should make things easier. Less people also means less factions within our own year, the school is divided enough as it is already." Alex handed Elena a list of names, all eleven year old that had enrolled in Durmstrang this term. "Currently the school holds three separate factions, each complete with their own agenda and motives. Hm, there we have the conservative faction, clinging to the power and traditions they have learned at home, completely oblivious to the necessary changes that have to come with time. Next are the abolitionists, a complete band of loons that want to get rid of old traditions just for the sake of changing something and rebelling against the system. And last we have the biggest faction, the uncaring masses of the self-righteous dreamers. Those who wish to go their own way, unaffected by anyone's ideology." Alex had another look at the information he had received. Some of those files he had received earlier came directly from other Durmstrang students, most from one and the same person, Tobias Lohrenz, Martins younger brother and a seventh year student coming this year for the last time to Durmstrang.

"We will have to find a way to approach all those factions equally, master. Else we won't find many supporters there." Alex frowned as Elena called him master again, something he greatly dislikes as it reminds him of his fathers subservience to his grandfather.

"No Elena. We won't approach them. I will create my own faction and lure them out of their shells to see the world my way. They will approach us, it is the only way. Strength is everything in this school. Not just physical strength but also cunning and influence." He looked at Elena with a straight face, tossing a file of a second year student over to her. "The older students try to oppress their younger counterparts but last year a new student enrolled in the school, another dreamer but none the less his strength and wit helped him gain a lot of influence even among older students. He is also our headmasters current favorite. Viktor Krum is his name. We will have to deal with him as well, to gain him as ally would be... beneficial but it won't be easy." Again Alex looked contemplative at the files before him. There was a hell lot of work to do, but at least he won't have to do it all alone.

Elena nodded to Alex assessment of the current situation. It was good they would already have a number of supporters at school though. Besides Martins younger brother there were children of others that supported their cause. Some would even start with them this year, like Ivanna and Benedikt Kasakow, Fedors niece and nephew. There were also supporters among the teaching staff like Torsten Schaefer, a distant cousin of Conrad who could help them out while they were attending this school, though Alex did not want to rely on the people of higher authority to prove himself to others.

Soon they concluded their studies of their classmates and returned to their normal routines. While Elena steadily improved her skills Alex was still so far ahead of her it was almost discouraging, but none the less she wanted to succeed to be more than a liability for him. Alex by now had changed his training, some weeks ago he had begun to train his weaker arm to be able to fight with both arms equally, a quite difficult task, but where his attempts were clumsy at first he was now at least able to write almost normal with his left arm, but fighting with it was still out of the question.

The day of their departure both youngsters were brought to Hamburg by Alex parents. From there a ship would bring them to the famous wizard school. As it was tradition all students, no matter where they came from first gathered in Hamburg to be brought to school. All magical schools had such traditions, though no one really remembered the point behind these. In the harbor they were awaited by the sight of a magnificent black Galleon, though it looked rather old it was an impressive ship none the less. All around families were

saying their good byes to their children as one after another walked up the planks to board the ship that would bring them to their school at the coast of the Barents Sea close to the Russian-Norwegian border. The trip itself would take more than an entire day, time given to the children to get to know each other or at least that was what Martins brother told them he suspected to be the reason for the rather long trip.

Said brother was currently approaching Alex and his family with a big smile at seeing his older sibling. "Martin, its so good to see you. It has been quite a while, mother had been worried you know." Tobias Lohrenz gave his brother a rather exaggerated bear hug, both men laughing and bantering for a bit before they turned to the family waiting beside them.

"Ah Tobias, you already know my... boss, Conrad Jaeger and his lovely wife Selene." Tobias had met Alex parents only once before, when he delivered the information about the school to them. He found them to be a quite pleasant company and was already looking forward to work together with his brother for these people.

"Of course. Good day to you Mr Jaeger, Mrs Grindelwald. And that must be your son and his friend. Hello there young sir, as you have already heard my name is Tobias Lohrenz and I shall be your humble servant at Durmstrang during your first year." Tobias said the last part with a strange voice and an over-exaggerated bow to Alexander, waiting for a reply. Alex couldn't help himself but to snicker at the funny display.

"You were right Martin, your brother is truly a comedian." At this Tobias started laughing himself before Martin hit him playfully on the back of his head. After a few more pleasantries Tobias bid his farewell from the family and boarded the ship, soon followed by Alex and Elena, much to Selenes dismay.

"They grow up so awfully fast, I can't believe he already starts his education at that horrible school. I still believe we should have sent him to Beauxbatons, a much safer and warmer place than Russia." Selene looked a last time at her sons retreating form with a tinge of sadness.

"You know your father would never have accepted that Selene. He would have sent you to Durmstrang as well had he know of your

existence then but alas you had your way and went to that french school instead... Our son is strong and Durmstrang will do him good." With an arm around her shoulder Conrad lead his wife away from the scene, closely followed by Martin. Now the children were on their own, but surely they would manage.

Once on board Alex and Elena went to the cabins that were provided for each of the students to change into their school uniforms. Unlike other magical schools Durmstrangs school uniforms had no robes. Rather than that the students were required to wear rather plain brown clothing, nothing fancy but more then sufficient to keep the students war in the cold Russian climate. The entire school uniform was unisex, no differences were made to accommodate the female students during their stay in school. Together with a long fur-lined cloak and heavy leather boots the complete attire would never give any suspicion that these were anything but simple students attending a boarding school but it would keep them warm the entire time they were there. This was a necessity as Durmstrang unlike Hogwarts was situated in an area of extreme colds during almost the entire year.

Alex lingered in his cabin for a while, when he left to spend some time on deck he found Elena already waiting for him outside his room. She had followed his example and already changed into the school uniform though it was a bit odd to see the young Veela that mostly used to wear form fitting clothing suddenly clad in this militaristic attire. To Alex surprise Elena was not alone, as two more students were there waiting with her as well. After short introductions Alex learned that these two were the Kasakow twins, the children of Fedors younger brother Nestor, Ivanna and Benedikt. Benedikt actually looked like a younger clone of Fedor, but without a beard and the ever present crazed glint in his eyes. Ivanna on the other hand had the looks of a graceful young lady, groomed to be a promising wife by her family, something Alex frowned upon as looks would not help her, or him in particular, with their plans at school. Both young Kasakows sported the same raven hair and brown eyes like their uncle, though their eyes radiated a warmth Alex had never seen with Fedor. They chatted only for a short time longer before all four of them left for the deck, to keep an eye on the other students there, to verify their information.

Only few students had remained on deck, though the sun was shining brightly a cold wind made staying there rather

uncomfortable. Alex soon spotted Tobias with a group of other seventh years standing near the starboard railing, chatting animated. There were mostly other students from older age-groups, standing in groups chatting, bantering or simply enjoying the travel in companionable silence. Nothing out of the ordinary and rather boring, but before Alex and his group could leave the deck, his name was called across the deck.

"Wait a moment, Grindelwald. I really think we should talk for a moment." When Alex turned to the voice he saw a teen in rather fancy clothing walk towards him, a smug look on his face, followed by a bunch of goons.

"Mikhail Pajari, what does the ringleader of the conservatives want from me? Speak quickly I don't have all day." Alex frowned inwardly. He did not want to meet this guy today. If anything he had heard about that teenager was correct he was a very nasty piece of work.

"You would do well to respect you betters, Grindelwald. I am here to secure your loyalty to our cause at school. The conservatives can do great things for you and you will contribute greatly to our agenda." A strange smile formed on his face as he observed the young Grindelwald heir.

"You are mistaken Pajari, I do respect my betters, you just happen to not be one of them. You better leave now before you make more of a fool out of yourself and your faction. I will join a faction or remain neutral regardless of what your kind could offer me." Alex looked at the perplexed boy with much contempt, Ivanna chuckling behind him about seeing that person like this. By now more and more people had gathered to watch the scene, among them Tobias who seemed undecided whether he should interfere or not.

Tobias decision was made when he saw Alex looking at him slightly shaking his head. Pajari was fuming by now as more people got great amusement at his expense, especially those from the other factions. He finally snapped when Alex turned to leave, not even giving him one last glance. Without thinking the teenager charged at the younger boy, his fists ready to strike him but to his and everyone else shock he not just missed the boy, but also got a cutting punch to his gut. Pajari couldn't even react before Alex had him pinned to the ground, one arm twisted around by Alex, while the boy also had one foot on the teens back, making him wince in pain.

"That was a grave mistake Pajari. No one attacks me and gets out unharmed you understand that or should I write it down for you in big capital letters?" People all around were laughing at how easy the leader of the conservatives had been take out by a small boy, even if the boy is in fact the heir to Gellert Grindelwald. Alex looked around, seeing the glee in many faces. "You all take this as a warning. No one fucks with me and gets away with that. Wrong me or any of those with me and you can pray to your god that I will never find you." He looked down at the wincing teen below him. "You brought great shame not just to your own name, but also to your family and your faction, Mikhail. But since I am lenient today I let you go with just humiliation. Better stay clear of me for the rest of the year Mikhail or else you will find you last year at school very... troublesome." Alex gave Elena a sign with his other hand and quickly thereafter she knocked Pajari out with a kick against his temple while Alex still twisted his arm up so he couldn't move.

Leaving behind many awed and even some scared faces Alex and his group quickly left the deck then to find themselves a common room where they could relax for now. Alex looked really pleased for the rest of the day, as Pajaris idiocy has given him an easy way to make a first impression on the students of Durmstrang and that impression was definitely a clear one that would give him a good start for an own faction, while he destroyed the current factions one by one.

Now seated in a small room with half dozen chairs and a table, Alex and his companions used the time to talk, well mostly Benedikt talked, widely impressed by Alex display of strength out there. "Man boss that was awesome. I can't believe you could take out a seventh year that easily, I mean he is so much older and should be stronger then us firsties." All the while the young boy was bouncing up and down in excitement.

Alex sighed, making a silent note to break Benedikt out of his childish behavior. It was complete opposite to his sister, the young girl sitting in a strained upright position, trying to act like a proper lady. "Yes Benedikt, it was rather easy. I knew before that Pajari had a temper when someone treats him with contempt and for a seventh year he is pathetically weak. His place as leader of his faction made him lazy, he had goons to do the fighting but to his dismay these goons were uncertain whether to follow their leaders stupidity again.

Good for us, sucks for him that's all there is to it." Alex talked in a calm collected voice, trying to get the other boy to calm down that way. "And please Benedikt, don't call me boss, master or anything of the sort, I really don't like it." He glance over to Elena who watched him curious as ever. "And same goes for you Elena." At that the young Veela simply nodded, opting not to say anything at the moment.

The rest of the travel to Durmstrang went by rather boring, nothing more of interest had happened. But the way people looked at Alex had changed now. While most of the older students eyed him with distrust, especially those from the conservatives, the younger students looked at him in awe. Alex noticed this and smiled at the situation. Now it would be much easier to gain more followers from the younger years, but for the older he would have to find something else to get them on his side.

When the ship arrived at Durmstrang the next morning the students were greeted by the sight of the magnificent campus. Two large buildings and some smaller buildings were scattered on the school ground. The largest buildings being the dorms and the main school-building with the great hall, offices for the teachers and most of the classrooms, were on contrary sides of a park. In the center park trees were growing around the quidditch pitch of the school. Some smaller buildings were located along paths paved with white stone. The school grounds were massive, not only had the school its own port but was also surrounded by forests and wide fields. All guarded by high walls with heavy wards to keep any unwanted visitors to the school out. In one of the books Alex had read on his new school there was also a large network of underground tunnels mentioned, so students and teachers could get from one building to the other even in case the weather prevented to do so otherwise. The most impressive thing about the wards of the school was that they were also intended to alter the weather, inside the wards of the school the temperatures would be much more pleasant then outside, though they would never rise above more then 15 or 16 degrees Celsius even in summer. Another most curious thing about Durmstrang was that there were absolutely no house elves here. The creatures were seen as too low and dirty to even serve humans, so their jobs were done by a huge number of hired servants. The school was truly breathtaking in every way possible and now they were given the chance to spend their next seven years here, learning and growing powerful.

All students were first brought to their new dorms by the servants that would now take care of their everyday needs as food and doing the laundry. The school always had a constant number of 350 students, no more and no less were permitted to attend the school at the same time. A tradition that was often criticized while the wizarding society faced greater numbers of muggle born students every year. That was also another thing people criticized about Durmstrang, their complete exclusion of any muggle born wizard among their students. Under the claim that their facilities would not be big enough to accommodate more students and the prerogative of children from wizarding families they had always kept such students out. With the low numbers of students each year every student was granted a room of his own, as privacy was a right of all students and teachers at this school. The rooms themselves were rather plain, a large bed, a wardrobe, some shelves and a desk, nothing more, but at least every room had its own bathroom. All kinds of entertainment and such were publicly located in the many common rooms scattered throughout the building.

In the evening all students were to meet in the main building for the grand feast at the beginning of every year. The great hall where they would be served their meals was huge, a long table in a U-form prepared for the students and another long table in front of the students for the teachers, all tables framing an ornament of the schools crest on the floor between them.

When the students arrived at the hall most of the teachers and the headmaster were already seated along their table, watching the students intently as they entered the hall. In the middle of all the teachers sat the headmaster Igor Kakaroff, a man Alex had been warned about as he was supposedly a former follower of the british dark lord Voldemort. Said man searched among the students for two faces. One was of course Alexander Grindelwald, the schools newest celebrity and the other Viktor Krum, the headmasters favorite student. The latter had become a prestigious quidditch player, often called a prodigy and was already expected to join his countries national team sometime during the next years once he was old enough.

Once all students had settled in and found a place among the table, the headmaster stood up to give his speech.

"Good evening and welcome to another term at Durmstrang. You all have made it here, that in itself is a reason to be proud, but should you become lazy and complacent you will fall. We will teach you what is needed to gain strength but those without the ambition to use this knowledge will not survive in this environment. We are not cruel but we live in a world where the only the strong can rule and those of you that can't cope with that would be better advised to leave now and attend another school for the more weak minded.

Never forget that at all times the orders of you teachers are absolute, disobedience will not be tolerated and severely punished. Also all of you are allowed to roam the school grounds at your own will but be advised that the harsh weather is a constant factor that should not be forgotten. We can't come and save you every time you get yourselves in harms way. Lastly be reminded that all fighting among students has to be limited to the dueling ring, fighting in the hallways and classrooms is strictly forbidden. With all this said, enjoy your meal and have a productive year."

With cautious applause from the students the headmaster sat back down as the food appeared on the tables. The meal was eaten in relative silence, in the presence of their headmaster and all of the teachers only few dared to break rank. Only an hour later the feast ended and the students returned to their dorms. Alex though stayed up late that night, pondering is next step. The next day would be the first day of their classes and from there on everyone would watch his steps and actions.

So now the new term at Durmstrang begins. It was rather hard to come up with a description of the school as there was only little information given on the school itself and only vague indications to its location. As I have not yet seen any other fic describing what others believe Durmstrang looks like, I have come up with my own description of what I believe the school could look like.

Also again I have introduced new OCs, both for Alexanders side and as his possible rivals. Though I try to keep the number of OCs down to a minimum there is still the need for these OCs as in all Harry Potter books only few (I believe it were only two) students from Durmstrang were named. Oh well the story is so far AU what harm can OCs do, I prefer to use an OC instead of screwing up canon characters in a way that is totally opposite to their initial personality.

And again I ask you to please leave a Review with your opinion.

Chapter6: Offers

The next morning came early for Alex. Though he had stayed up late he resumed his usual schedule and began his morning training as every day. It was only 5 am and most students were still asleep when Alex left his room for a his usual laps. Only Elena was awake around the same time, already waiting for him. Ever since she came to live with him she had gone through the same routines, steadily improving her stamina to match his. Physical training had little value in the wizarding society, but the old Grindelwald had insisted that his grandson would go through with it. The benefits were more then obvious in all the sparring matches Alex had with his less athletic trainers. To have the stamina to run, jump and whatnot gave him the advantage in a fight that would one day save his life, a believe he had soon imparted on Elena as well.

For about an hour that ran laps around the park in the center of the school grounds in varying speed before they returned to the dorms. All the time they were training servants stopped in their tracks and watched the unusual sight. Now they still had an hour left before most of their fellow students would even stand up, though both decided not to continue their training, as they were not sure what would await them on their first day and some plans still had to be discussed away from prying ears. After getting rid of their warm clothing and a quick shower Alex and Elena met again in one of the smaller meeting rooms where they ran across the Kasakow twins already waiting for them.

"Morning boss, when I saw you and Elena reenter the building from my room I woke up my sister and we went to search for you, is there anything we can do? We want to help you." Benedikt seemed less jumpy then on the ship, though it must be due to lack of sleep, surely he would normally not be up this early.

Alex scowled when Benedikt called him boss again, despite what he had ordered him to call him the day before. "Good morning to both of you. And Benedikt I told you to not call me boss." Benedikt cringed a bit when his memories of the day before kicked in. He muttered a silent 'sorry' and rubbed the back of his head sheepishly. "But I am pleased to see you both here. If you truly wish to serve our goal I will surely find a way to bring you talents to use. "

"Bo... Alex why where you running around the park down there? It must be really cold, why go out this early anyway?" Benedikt's childish curiosity made Alex chuckle. He and Elena were more mature than most their age, Benedikt was the best example what an eleven year old should be like. He definitely would have to take this into account for his plans to win over the other students in his year.

"It's called training Benedikt. Physical training to enhance our stamina and reflexes." Alex couldn't help but smile as this just gave him an idea to gain some followers.

"Also it is really fun and makes you feel much better once you're into it. It's hard in the beginning but after a while it is so good I can tell you." At Elena's interjection Alex arched an eyebrow in amusement, usually Elena rarely talks about anything, but maybe she had the same idea he had.

"Yeah you two should really come with us to train, it will also help you in being a better help for whatever tasks I will assign you someday." Alex watched the twins, while Benedikt seemed to ponder it, Ivanna showed no reaction to this at all.

"I'm game for it, I come with you and see what this training will do to me. If this really is enough to get you out of bed so early in the morning there has to be something to it." And again he started bouncing. Alex chuckled at her sight, maybe the training would break him out of that habit.

"And what about you Ivanna? Your brother is willing to do it, so what about you?" Elena looked expectantly at the other girl, wondering what she would think about all this.

"I won't do it. It would not be proper for a young lady to run in circles at such an ungodly hour. My parents would be appalled." Ivanna stated this in a matter-of-factly voice as if only a fool would doubt her belief.

Alex growled at this, that way Ivanna would be utterly useless to them, they had no need for a proper little lady, not now and not in the future. Girls and women believing in such crap only turn out to be liabilities in case of a war. "Don't give me that crap Ivanna. Your whole proper lady nonsense will help you nothing in this world. This way you won't even be able to survive your first year in this school. If

you want to be like this then you better leave, go to Beauxbatons, that school will help you find your way as a proper whatever, but if you wish to remain here and help us you better snap out of this and start acting like it is required by this school. Strive for strength, find ways to get what you want, when you want but don't sit by the sidelines and try to look pretty for some foolish, inbred pureblood asshole that looks for a trophy he can show around as a wife." Ivanna looked shocked, never before had anyone talked to her in this manner. She quickly stood up and left the room, but not before glancing back with tearful eyes.

"Ouch, don't you think this was a bit too harsh? I mean this is the life our parents have prepared her to live, she knows little else." Benedikt tried to defend his sister's reaction, though there was little reason to do so anyway.

"No Benedikt, she had to hear it now while we are still at the beginning. Better she makes up her mind about her future while she can still change it easily. She will come to a decision, then we shall see how much she is willing to do for our cause." Alex spoke in a calm voice, though he felt like a real ass for hurting the girl's feelings by criticizing the way she lives and thinks. But he believed in his own words, she had to hear it now before it was too late to turn back.

For another hour they remained in the room, talking about what could await them today and how they would proceed in gaining more people to follow their own agenda. They would have to act quickly with the rest of the first years before the three predominant factions had a chance to recruit these children.

Around 8 am they had returned to the great hall for breakfast and to get their timetables. Though she sat next to her brother Ivanna neither talked to anyone nor did she look at anyone. She seemed distant, far away in her thoughts so she didn't even hear the teacher calling her name to hand her her new schedule for the year. Benedikt had to shake her a bit before she snapped out of her stupor. Alex watched the scene with a calculating gaze, what he had said earlier would either gain him another ally or estrange the girl from him completely.

The first lesson that day would be combat magic, or dark arts as some narrow minded people had dubbed the subject. The entire morning until dinner would be spent with this single subject. Time

necessary for the children to fully grasp what they were taught and time for the teacher to pounce common sense into the heads of those who used the learned spells carelessly. The teacher, Agnieszka Kumiega was still very young so it was common that the headmaster himself helped her during those lessons whenever he had time to spare, not because he was such a nice person or had taken a liking in the young woman, but more because this was the subject he excelled in the most. He used every chance he got to hone his skills and the excuse to help the young teacher was good enough for him to spend more time training himself.

After breakfast was finished the first years hurried to their designated classroom. It was underground, the room itself was one of the biggest on the entire campus. And indeed as predicted Igor Kakaroff was already awaiting the students arrival impatiently. The look on the headmasters face was filled with contempt and loathing, he thought little about first years and made no real attempt to hide it. When Alex entered the large room that also held the dueling arena he could already feel Kakaroffs gaze burning into his head. Now Alex was glad he went through the tedious meditating while learning basic occlumency to shield his mind. Would the headmaster really try to enter his mind, Alex shields would brake rather fast at the moment, but to his delight the grim looking man retreated from his mind as soon as he felt a resistance.

Once all students where in the room Professor Kumiega stepped up front. "Good morning class. I am Professor Kumiega and I will be you instructor in combat magic during your time in Durmstrang. Here you will learn many things some people would consider as dark arts, but believe me we will only teach you how to properly fight and survive. To be prepared for all eventualities is an important aspect of life and to be able to defend yourself properly is a necessity these days when power obsessed madmen lurk around every corner." Alex couldn't help but see her short side ward glance at the headmaster as she said the last few words. Kakaroff though had not seen it, he was still trying to burn holes in Alex head with his eyes.

"As I realize some of you have already seen some training at home, so todays lesson will be for me to see your current skill level so we can start at a point that will benefit all of you equally. Therefore I will split you up into groups of 4 so you can spar with each other, while I will walk around to see what you can do. So first group will be..:" The

young Professor was just about to announce the first group as Kakaroff interrupted her, much to her annoyance.

"Grindelwald, I wish to test your strength myself. Meet me down in the Arena there I will test what you really have in you. Hopefully for you there is more than just a big name." Kakaroff had a nasty grin on his face as he passed an completely outraged Kumiega on his way to the arena. The arena itself was large ring a few meters lower than the rest of the room. The arena floor was not made of stone like the rest of the room but it was the normal black-brown earth that covered the ground outside the buildings.

Alex couldn't help but feel anxious at the thought of facing the headmaster of all persons in the school in a duel, but to back down was impossible, it would ruin his reputation, making his plans impossible to finish. Also he feared what his grandfather would do to him would he find out his heir had run away from a duel with a man the old Grindelwald described as a shameful coward.

All students present were now on the ranks around the arena, waiting impatiently for whatever would happen now. Elena and Benedikt though looked unsure of what to think at the moment. Elena was worried about the outcome of this duel, Benedikt on the other hand was unsure whether to cheer for Alex or keep his mouth shut to not anger the headmaster.

"Now we will see what your name is worth young Grindelwald. Kumiega begin the duel." Kakaroffs tone towards the young teacher was commanding, everyone could see she was more than displeased with this happening but she had no choice at the moment but to comply.

"Standard rules, all is allowed except permanent damage and killing strikes. Both duelist... begin." Without waiting for another second Kakaroff started flinging spell after spell at the first year student. Alex had no time to erect any shields so he opted for evading. He dived to the side, the first barrage of spells merely missing him by inches before they impacted to the ground creating craters. Alex was quickly back on his feet, finally returning the fire. But still he could not keep up with the speed the older wizard shot his spells at him. The few spells Alex was able to cast before he had to evade once more. Alex spells were weak though so they bounced off Kakaroffs shields without doing any damage. He was astounded

why Kakaroff had not yet said anything to taunt him, when he saw the man silently muttering spell after spell, deeply in concentration. This got Alex an idea to gain one small advantage against the older man. After another dive to evade his opponents spells Alex jumped to his feet and cast some of the strongest bludgeon hexes he knew at the ground before Kakaroff, hurling earth against the man, especially against his face. This distracted Kakaroff enough to break his concentration. For the first time in the duel Alex could turn the tables and cast spells in succession without having to evade all the time. But all his spells bounced off the shield though he could see the shield weaken with every spell he used. Kakaroff was still trying to get the dirt out of his face and eyes as Alex continued with his barrage. Finally the shield collapsed but before he could exploit the situation the duel was over.

"That is enough." Kakaroff's voice was booming in the large room. "A very nice display of skills Grindelwald." Without waiting for a reply Kakaroff turned around to Professor Kumiega. "Kumiega from now on I will see to this boy's training personally, go finish your lesson with the rest of them." But before the students could leave he spoke once more. "And all of you look at your classmate as an example. He fought well despite being at a disadvantage. He faced this fight like a man and played his cards right, I expect all of you to reach his level before the year comes to an end. And now get to your training." He yelled the last part, making many of the children squirm. Only Elena remained a second longer, looking the headmaster into the eyes before finally turning around to leave like the rest of the students. Kakaroff though was amused, he had found another worthy student and the way that girl had looked at him right now intrigued him. He would definitely have to keep an eye on her as well.

Alex still stood there, wondering whether he should feel honored or threatened by the thought of having Kakaroff as a personal teacher in combat magic. The man was good at this no doubt, but his intentions were still a mystery. Alex settled for asking his grandfather for advice on how to proceed in this situation.

"I must admit Grindelwald, you surprised me here. Next time I won't give away openings to you so easily in a fight." Alex could have sworn he heard a tinge of amusement in the headmaster's voice. "But we need to work on your defense, avoiding is good, a strong shield is better. I will train you until you can stand up against anyone,

but that will come at a price." Finally the headmaster showed his true colors.

"And what would your training cost me, headmaster Kakaroff?" Alex tried to be polite, though his missing respect for this man as a teacher made his own words sound like loathing to himself.

"You play a dangerous game child. I know what you did on the ship. I can see through you. You are just the same as your grandfather, you wish to be in control, to rule. But remember one thing Grindelwald. Not the factions rule this school, I do. Should you wish to gain any influence here you will have to pass me first." The grin on the mans face could easily be described as smug, he was very sure of his superior position in this.

"So you want me to work together with you. And what benefit would you get from this?" Alex already had a suspicion what the man was prying at.

"You are famous just for your name Grindelwald. But names are only worth the breath you need to speak them out. In this school people will fight you because of that name, others will follow you blindly because of it. I am sick of the warring factions in this school, pacify them and I will train you all you need to know for your future."

"And as a bonus you will be known as the man who aided my rise. You would gain a place in whatever society that would rule later on, a comfortable place with much gains and little duties. I can see your point well headmaster. I also know of your past. Training the heir of Grindelwald would also give you the political support of my families allies, something you would dearly need should the Brits ever find out you lied your way out of their prison after your former master had fallen." Kakaroffs eyes narrowed dangerously at this, though he remained silent. "I say yes Kakaroff, train me all you know about combat magic and the other things you can offer me and I will see that no one will ever have you locked up in Askaban." Alex couldn't help but show a triumphant smile as he held out his hand to the headmaster. After a few moments of hesitation the man shook Alex hand, sealing their deal.

Alex and Kakaroff remained separated from the rest of the class for the remainder of the morning lesson, mostly talking about combat magic. Despite of what Alex thought of the man he had to admit

Kakaroffs training would be most valuable. When the lesson came to an end Kakaroff quickly dismissed his student and left the room so Alex had to wait and had time to watch how others were doing in this subject. As expected Elena was the strongest in the group, even though she had only started training a year ago she had already learned a great many things.

At the end Alex was rejoined by Elena and Benedikt both looking at him expectantly. "I know you have many questions right now, but you will have to postpone asking them for now." Alex was not willing to answer any such questions in the middle of the hall, surrounded by people he couldn't trust at the moment. Elena and Benedikt accepted this, though both were also a bit disappointed, curiosity of what has happened after the duel making them anticipate the free hours after dinner, before the afternoon classes would begin.

News of Alex's fight against the headmaster spread fast among the students and soon Alex was confronted with the same sight as on the ship after he chastised Pajari. But this time he received the adoration of many more than just the first years, even higher years had to credit him for his skill to stand in the ring with Kakaroff and come out without a scratch. Alex looked at this whole new scene with a bit of satisfaction, the headmaster had done him more of a favor than the man would ever know. Yes now he would most definitely gain more people to join his cause, he just had to be subtle in recruiting them.

Later he met with Benedikt and Elena in a secluded room to talk about his deal with the headmaster. "Alright you two I know you want to know desperately what has happened after the headmaster had sent you guys away. To make a long story short he offered me to train me all he knows in exchange for a little help with ... political difficulties."

"So his past has finally caught up to him and now he needs the strength of the Grindelwald family to survive. We should have expected such a thing would happen sooner or later." Elena had a satisfied smirk on her lips. "This will make things a lot easier."

Alex simply nodded before he continued. "The deal was much more favorable for me than for him, I think had I lost the duel with abysmal skills he would have played the role of the benevolent mentor

tending to a lowly student in need, alas things went different and now he treated me almost as an equal."

"So what are we gonna do now Alex?" Benedikt was all jumpy again, he could hardly await the next step in their plan, whatever that step would be. Currently Alex and Elena did not trust him enough to share all details with him, but Benedikt was determined to gain their trust and become a full member of their circle as soon as possible.

Only a few more words were spoken before the children had to go off to their next lesson, herbiology closely followed by potions. Alex groaned when he saw this on the timetable. The former was the most boring subject they could ever teach at a school and the latter mostly attracted antisocial freaks as teachers and Alex currently had no interest in experiencing either of it. But to his delight he was met with stares of awe everywhere he went that day. Oh yes so far the first day had proven to be of great value to their plans.

But sadly the rest of the day went by just as boring as they had predicted, no more chances to impress the other students, nothing worth learning this day so in the end Alex, Elena and Benedikt were more than happy when they finally walked to dinner, the official end of a school day.

Okay that was the first day, I really hope you people liked it as I tried to portray the school in a very different light compared to Hogwarts. I also hope that Kakaroff was not too OOC here, though this is the way I expected him to act in his own school, seeing his actions in Hogwarts during the tournament.

Oh well as always please leave a review, even though I can't answer all questions for the reasons I stated at the beginning of this chapter I would really like to know how you people like it so far.

Chapter7: Superiority

The day went well for Conrad so far. Finally they had received a letter from their son, not a moment too soon for Selene. She had her doubts that Durmstrang would do her son any good, fearing for her sons well-being she was more then restless for the first few days of her sons absence. But the moment the owl delivered Alex letters she brightened up, reading of her sons first steps at that foreign place. To Conrads surprise one letter was also intended for the boys grandfather so Conrad had little choice but to pay the old man another visit at his prison. Like always the way to the top of the tower was dreading, the sound of waves crashing against the towers walls, the general darkness within the tower itself, all was unnerving Conrad. He sighed when he had finally reached his masters room, taking a last deep breath before he knocked and entered after hearing his masters call.

"Ah Conrad, I was not expecting to see you so soon. Any news of my heir? The boy should have started school by now, or am I mistaken on this part?" The old wizard did not even once look at his son in law while he addressed him, instead he kept on reading in an small black book in his hands.

"Yes master. Alex has started school last week and has sent his first letters by now. He also sent one for you, master." With this he held the still sealed letter to the old man. Grindelwald scrutinized the letter for some moments before he took it and broke the seal. Conrad studied the changing emotions on his masters face while he read the letter. Finally he finished reading with a cold chuckle, making Conrad cringe a bit.

"What a fool. That unbelievable fool actually dares to demand such things, he is a disgrace for that school." The old men shook his head while he continued his rant after he saw Conrads questioning face. "Kakaroff, that fool offered Alexander to become his private tutor for combat magic, but he has his own demands in return. He wants our support should his past come to haunt him. That fool was a Death Eater once and now he feels his past might come back and take his life away." He chuckled again in amusement. "Alexander has already guessed this mans intentions, as I would have expected from my heir. He tutors another student, a quidditch prodigy. Alexander surmises he does this to change peoples view of him in public. Be the benevolent tutor of the star to be loved by the people

and tutor an upcoming ruler to gain the political power and influence to survive in this world."

"His training could be of use to Alexander, despite his past Kakaroff is a strong fighter. His skills would do Alexander well." Conrad interjected his own thoughts to the topic, the old Grindelwald nodding in consent.

"Yes his training has its value. But he will never fully receive the support he desires. He once dared to serve another lord, now he has to pay the price for his unfaithfulness to us." The grin on the old mans face promised pain for the headmaster of Durmstrang. Kakaroff would have to learn that there are powers he should have better stayed clear of. "Anything else you wish to report now Conrad?" The old mans voice was cold again.

"Not much, but my son has requested that I send him more Arcanite, enough for about a dozen of those blocks he and Elena use to transmute into weapons. As it seems he has already found some more people to follow him." Conrad couldn't fully keep the pride out of his voice but I was of no matter to the old wizard, Grindelwald also looked quite satisfied at this.

"Excellent. Alexander does not disappoint me. He will conquer that school quite fast I am certain. And once he controls Durmstrang he will be able to control the next generation of rulers of our society. All is coming along as planed." The old wizard laughed now, a cold unnatural laugh but it seemed to be the first time he had shown such emotions in front of Conrad, the old man seemed more then happy about his heirs promising actions.

The next few day started for Alex in a similar manner then the last. Rising early for the usual training with Elena, though this day they were accompanied by Benedikt and to their surprise a small group of other first years that had seen Alex performance against the headmaster. The training went well, they had to go easy on the new ones in the group but none the less all of them expressed their willingness to continue with their training.

During breakfast Alex was called to the table where Kakaroff and the rest of the teachers were eating so Kakaroff could hand Alex a new timetable with the private tutoring lessons placed on nearly every day of the week. Kakaroff also told Alex that during this lessons he

would also meet his other protege, one Viktor Krum who had the 'privilege' of this training since the last year.

The morning lessons went by really fast and after lunch the first private lesson with the headmaster came. Alex had expected much, but never would he have thought the headmaster had a completely warded training room hidden inside in the schools dungeons. Though it was much smaller then the normal room where the others had their lessons this room was perfectly fitted to teach a small number of persons some things that were... unusual for their normal curriculum.

Kakaroff was late, both his students already waiting for him impatiently. Alex scrutinized the other boy intently. Viktor Krum was just a year older then him, a Bulgarian star quidditch player. Alex expected him to be arrogant and smug, all the praise and ass kissing Krum received should have spoiled the kid by now. Krum did the same as Alex, watching the other boy carefully, the thoughts well hidden, nothing giving away what he truly thought at the moment.

After a few minutes of silence it was Krum who talked first. "Grindelwald, a big name you carry. Don't you think I will start following you like those foolish first years you have as followers. I will show you that there is more to this world than names, I will show you true power and you will bow to me." Krum narrowed his eyes dangerously, trying to intimidate Alex, though Alex looked at the older boy rather bored.

"You are all talk Krum. To many people kissing the prodigies ass have made foolishly believe you are something important. I will show you your place, fool. Being good at only one thing you will soon learn that there is more to be aware of. I don't need you to follow me, to destroy you would do my plans just as fine." Alex spoke in a calm voice, smirking at Krum. It pleased Alex to see the older boy back away slightly, anger now contorting Krums face.

Before any more words could be spoken Kakaroff entered the room, not one word about his lateness. He started the lesson without delay and soon showed his two students a complex shield charm, as both Alex and Viktor would first have to learn a better defense before they could be taught offensive spells. Needless to say both students saw themselves challenged by the other, their duel at the end of the

lesson getting almost out of hand as they both tried to force the other into submission.

Like this the first few weeks passed by quickly. Every day more students joined Alex and his group in their training, something that pleased Alex a lot. He could easily influence those children while they followed his instructions. Some of them had already shown their worth and joined Alex group like Benedikt, giving them a much better position in school against the other factions.

About a month after the school had started Alex was approached by Ivanna. So far the girl had avoided him and his group, much to the displeasure of her brother Benedikt. But now she seemed to have made up her mind.

"Alex, I wish to talk to you if you have a minute for me." She asked almost timidly, Alex knew she was not a shy person or anything of the sort, but she seemed rather nervous.

"Sure Ivanna. Have you come to a conclusion about what you want to do with your own life? You remember my words I hope. I meant them back then and I still believe in them." At the mention of his last word to the girl Ivanna cringed a bit, this lecture must have had a bigger impact on the young girl then he thought.

"Yes... Yes I do remember and I took my time contemplating their meaning to me. I have seen some of the older girls that are like me, they were given away by their families for power, married into other pureblood families at young ages. I don't want to end up like that. I don't want to end up with one of these stuck up assholes that care nothing about the girl they have to marry as long as they get their heir. Please Alex, please help me to get out of this before my life gets ruined." This surprised Alex to no end. Ivanna was a proud girl, but now she pleaded for his help. Whatever she heard from the older girls in this school it must have really frightened her.

"Fine with me Ivanna. I told you that I would help you in case you change your mind and see reason. If you are willing to go through the same things as the rest of us I will allow you to rejoin our group." At this the girl looked at him hopefully. "But as you have once left us I require your oath to remain loyal to me and my cause." At this the girl gasped, shocked about what Alex demanded of her. "Others have already given that oath, like Elena and your brother, some will

take it soon. Swear it and you will be a part of us again, if this is too much for you then leave now."

True enough others had already sworn their loyalty to Alex. Most of the children were too naive to get the full meaning of what they had done, other did so because they saw a chance in joining with the young Grindelwald at an early stage. Some had also been instructed by their families to do so for the same reason. All that had sworn their loyalty had also received the same Arcanite Alex and Elena used, all of them now had bracers or bracelets for the girls, showing their allegiance to the heir of Gellert Grindelwald. All of them were also learning to transmute the Arcanite into weapons and learned how to wield them.

Ivanna was still contemplating, her brother had already done so but could she swear an oath, swear fealty to Alexander Grindelwald? A few more moments passed before she looked at the waiting boy before her with determination shining in her eyes. "If this is what it takes I will swear the oath."

Alex smiled at the girl as he heard her words. Another loyal follower to fill his ranks and Ivanna would be a valuable addition to their group. Despite Alex's harsh words against her upbringing her knowledge of pureblood traditions and the current society would be helpful in convincing some of the more stuck-up students at school.

Another month passed by rather fast, school life becoming a boring routine fast for Alex and his group. By now he had already almost all first years under his thumb. Young and easy to influence they all felt drawn to the young Grindelwald, some for their own reasons, some after some encouraging by their parents. Being on the side of this young boy would truly benefit them as no one had a doubt that Alexander Grindelwald would be a major player in politics later on, his family's influence already gave benefits to families that had sort of an allegiance to them.

But not all went as peaceful as it seemed on the outside. The other factions at Durmstrang already felt threatened by the growing Grindelwald movement. While the neutrals couldn't care less for them, the conservatives and the abolitionists. The latter were a bit startled by the sudden growth of the new group but their open expression that they were not clinging to traditions somehow soothed the abolitionists for now. The conservatives though were

livid. Especially their leader. Pajari had already been humiliated by Grindelwald once and was out for blood as he saw his power lessen. He was willing to do anything to change this and had already formed a plan. He would have to send a message to Grindelwald not to fuck with him again. Attacking Grindelwald himself would be impossible, the boy was under the direct protection of the headmaster, but that same protection did not extend to some of his close followers.

During one morning training Alex, Elena and Benedikt were already finished with their laps before most others, no surprise as they had trained more than the rest and were fit as a fiddle. While they were waiting for the rest of the group a sixth year approached them unnoticed. Before any of them realized what was happening the older boy had drawn his wand sent a cutting curse at Elena. Too shocked to act Elena was hit by the curse, a large wound appearing on the left side of her abdomen.

The sixth year tried to turn and run after he yelled Pajari's message, 'don't fuck with traditions', but to his bad luck Alex had already caught up to him. A blow to his nose sent the older boy to the ground, an irate Grindelwald standing over him.

"Stand up you piece of shit. Who the fuck sent you?" Alex yelled at him, anger radiating around him, almost visible. Most of the other students had already arrived at the scene, some taking care of the wounded Elena, while most simply surrounded Alex and the unknown attacker, taking all chances of escaping from the older boy.

Said boy stood up. Blood dripping from his nose, uncertainty in his eyes. Alex had no patience left for the boy and hit him again, yelling once more. "Who sent you, do I have to beat the shit out of you before you open your mouth."

The older boy barely managed to stand after the second hit, fear now evident in his face. He looked around to see many angry faces, no one that would help him and no teacher in sight to stop this. He resigned to his fate and spoke quietly. "Pajari. He wanted me to send you a message not to fuck with our faction, he..."

Before the older boy could continue Alex became more enraged, with a yell of 'Pajari' he cast his strongest bludgeon spell against the boy, sending him flying against a nearby tree where the boy remained unconscious. Alex would have gone on a killing spree until

he had found Pajari, but was stopped as he saw Elenas bleeding form on the ground, surrounded by Benedikt and Ivanna.

"Elena, come on girl we have seen worse then this during training." Alex sounded almost desperate as he spoke to her. The thought of loosing his closest friend and confidant seemed unbearable for him.

"Alex we have to get her to the doctor, she has already lost much blood and went unconscious because of that. We have to hurry." Benedikt tried to talk calmly to his friend in an attempt to soothe his anger.

Not even giving any reply to Benedikts words Alex picked Elena up to carry her to the building that housed the schools own hospital. At that moment Professor Kumiega arrived at the scene, seeing Alex take off with his bleeding friend. She would have followed him hadn't Benedikt stopped her to explain the situation. All the while no one spared even a single thought on the attacker, though the boy was clearly wounded. Once the story ended the Professor went to bring the attacker to the hospital as well, followed by a small group of Alex inner circle of friends, while most others left to their daily routines.

At the hospital the doctors quickly tended to Elenas wound, she was soon out of danger. But the wound was deep and with the huge blood loss she would have to stay in hospital for at least another day or two, depending on her healing. Alex would have stayed with her but Benedikt and some of the other boys talked him out of it, leading him away to the great hall for breakfast while Ivanna promised to stay with Elena until she woke up again.

After changing into a clean school uniform, the former had been soaked in Elenas blood, Alex arrived at the great hall. Benedikt had hoped his friend would calm down a bit by now, especially in the presence of the teachers, but he had no such luck. Many stares and whispers from the students around would have been unnerving enough, but also the presence of the very source of todays tragedy sent Alex into another fit of rage. Pajari sat there, surrounded by his lackeys, looked at Alex with a smug grin, oblivious to the danger he had just placed himself in.

"Pajari" Alex yelled across the entire hall, instantly silencing all other persons present. "You have gone too far today. I taught you a lesson on the ship but you wouldn't listen. And now you attack one

of my friends. You will pay." Most teachers were ready to stop the entire scene, but all were stopped by the headmaster, Kakaroff already had a hunch where this would lead and he was willing to let his student have his way, just for the sake of seeing how far the young Grindelwald was ready to go. "In accordance to the old ways I challenge you to a duel Pajari. For hurting one of my retainers and friends we will fight until one of us lies dead in the ring."

At this the murmurs started again, most couldn't believe what they had just heard. Pajari had already lost his smugness, all color drained from his face. He looked at the teachers table, searching for help among the teachers, but he found no support there, only hard gazes directed at him and an almost amused Kakaroff. "As headmaster of this school I act as witness to this challenge. It goes all in accordance with the old ways and as such the duel will commence this noon in the school arena." Now there was no hope for Pajari to get out this. Even should he run away from the fight his and his families reputation would be ruined. Also since it was all going according to tradition he would destroy his own faction should the leader of the conservative deny the old ways.

The morning passed by rather fast after this. The news of the duel had spread fast among the students and on order from Kakaroff himself all afternoon classes had been canceled so all students could witness the fight.

Alex skipped his morning classes, staying with Elena. Despite what the doctors had said he was still unsure whether she would make it, she lay motionless in her bed, her face still pale. Alex couldn't help but feel like he had abandoned his duties towards her. He remembered the day he had met her, the fear in her eyes and his own determination to protect her. She had sworn to serve him and he, though only to himself, had sworn to protect her. Now this had happened, she had been hurt because of him. Never before had he thought that others might get hurt because of him. It was a clear fact to him now, that should he continue on his path others will get hurt because of him. Maybe even killed, but Alex dared not venture there with his thoughts at the moment. He would never be able to protect everyone, but now he made another oath for himself, to be more careful in his actions, never risking his friends and supporters safety without due cause.

The time for the duel came faster than most had anticipated. After a short lunch all students and teachers went down to the large duel chamber with the duel ring. Alex was accompanied by his entire group, except Ivanna, who again had taken up the duty to watch over Elena, though Benedikt surmised she does this also because she had no intention to see Pajari getting slaughtered. Pajari himself was also accompanied by his lackeys, though their number had diminished since breakfast, most of them were already guessing what was to come and had no intention to show any form of support for the leader of the conservatives.

Alex and Pajari were already inside the duel ring, students crowded above them to see the fight as Kakaroff stepped into the ring. "This duel will commence at my sign. It will only end with the death of at least one of the fighters. No restrictions, all is allowed as long as it does not pose any threat to the audience. Duelists ready... Begin." With the last word spoke Kakaroff apparated out of the ring, unwilling to be caught in the crossfire.

Both fighters did nothing at first, closely watching the opponent, daring the other to make the first mistake. In the end it was Pajari who acted first, unable to stand the tension any longer. He cast cutting curses in a fast succession at his younger opponent. But most spells bounced off Alex shields, Kakaroff looked pleased to see his student had finally mastered some of the defense techniques. When Pajari sent a bone-breaking curse at his enemy, Alex dove out of the way, after a quick roll he was back to his feet sending his own cutting curses at Pajari. But the older student had shields of his own. It went back and forth like this for a while, no student getting the upper hand, but Pajari tired faster than Alex.

Pajari tried to get a rise out of Alex by taunting him, but had no luck so far. "Huh you will follow your little Veela bitch soon Grindelwald. I will purge this school of such filthy beasts and all that treat them as though they were equal to us purebloods."

In a moment of carelessness on Pajari's side Alex sent a large bludgeon hex against the older boy's shields making him stagger. Alex used this moment and closed the distance between the two boys and before Pajari could act Alex had hit him hard with a punch to the gut, making Pajari stumble even more. Alex took his wand in his left hand as he transmuted his bracelet to his sword in the right hand. With a quick strike to Pajari's knees he sent the boy to the

ground. Now on all four Pajari still tried to curse his opponent but before he could say anything Alex kicked his wand-hand sending Pajaris wand flying across half of the ring and with another kick in Pajaris abdomen the older boy landed on his back, panting heavily. To Pajari the world seemed to blur a bit, he saw the other students on the ranks, some of his friends and supporters looking at him in contempt before they left the ranks. Alex came closer, now standing above the unarmed Pajari, his sword close to the other boys throat. Pajari looked at Alex pleading for his life, but he only found a hard, hate filled glare in the young Grindelwalds face. After a moments hesitation Alex brought down his sword one last time, beheading Pajari in one swift motion. Some students cheered, some simply stared unbelieving what had just happened, while most turned around unable to bare the sight of the now headless leader of the conservatives.

Alex looked around, slowly walking a circle in the ring looking at all present students before he addressed them. "Look at what arrogance will bring you, look at the price your choices might cost you." He yelled to make sure everyone heard him in the tumult. While he said this he pointed at Pajaris dead body with his blood tripping sword.

"He believed to be something better then all others here. He believed that his families name and influence would protect him. He never fought for himself, he always had others to do his work. Feeling safe in the traditions he worshiped so much. In these traditions he felt safe, untouchable. But he was wrong. True strength does not lie in tradition itself, it also means to see more then the past but to prepare for the future. All of you, look at him and think about what you believe in." At this he pointed his sword at the captivated audience.

"He believed that the traditions that protect pureblood societies would keep him safe, ensure his superiority. He was wrong. We all here are purebloods, one way or another. But that is not the supremacy that is needed in our world. This piece of shit there believed this and see what has come of it for him. True superiority lies within the blood of all magical beings. The superiority over the non magical societies. Follow the old traditions blindly and you will cut yourselves from true strength as only with all magical beings together we can be victorious. None of your factions are even in the slightest close to achieving such superiority. Relying on tradition is a

fault, denying traditions completely is a fault and not even caring about others is the worst fault you can have." At this he once more pointed his sword at people he knew of the three factions to emphasize his point.

Without further words Alex left the ring to get a shower and visit Elena. He was quickly followed by his supporters leaving behind a crowd he had stunned to silence with his words. The remaining conservatives were now hard pressed to keep their faction together while the abolitionists were angry that their ideals had been questioned here. The rest simply stood there contemplating the words and what they meant for them.

The teachers went back to their own business, some sending for servants to clean up Pajaris remains other leaving to retire for the day. Headmaster Kakaroff though looked at the dead body of the former conservative leader with a pleased expression. Now he was sure it was a good decision to gain the Grindelwalds support, the boy would make it far. He would become even more powerful than his grandfather, that Kakaroff was sure of.

Yeah I know it is a bit violent, but such things are needed here to give proper reasons for the development of Alex and his followers. But by all means, don't start believing Alex ambition to rule Durmstrang will be fulfilled anytime soon, this is just one of three factions and the conservatives have simply lost their leader, but are still far from beaten so don't fear there is still much to be done. This ain't over anytime soon.

So long, please leave me a review with your opinion, I would really appreciate that.

Chapter 8: Consequences

One day after Pajaris untimely demise parts of the story had already slipped out to the public media, leading to many people questioning the way the children were taught at Durmstrang. Kakaroff with a little help from the Grindelwald family and their supporters quickly put an end to the discussion, stating how it came to the death of a student in the duel arena. Even Pajaris family could do little else but except that their son had brought his fate upon himself with his actions.

But not all people accepted the story as it was told. In his office in Hogwarts one Albus Dumbledore frowned as he read the story in the british wizarding newspaper. He had feared that the young Grindelwald would be tempted to become dark and killing an other student was clearly as sign for dark activities in Dumbledores books. He himself could do nothing at the moment, but were the boy to be expelled from Durmstrang he would have little choice but to come to Hogwarts where he could be brought back on the right path. Beauxbatons would never take him after this and any smaller school would never do for a proud family like the Grindelwalds. Now all he had to do was to find a way for the boy to be expelled.

After completing his morning schedule Alex quickly made his way to the hospital to check up on his wounded friend. When he left the evening before Elena had still not woken up, the healer insisted that after loosing that much blood she would simply need time to regain enough strength but Alex remained wary. Ivanna had stayed with Elena during his fight, keeping her safe from any further attempts by any of the factions, but after his display of power and proofing just how far he is willing to go against people that cross him most of the older students avoided the young Grindelwald. His own followers were awestruck by their leaders strength. Seeing him defend one of his loyal followers also inspired the rest to be much more loyal to see the same treatment from him, most of them missing the fact that Elena was more then just a normal follower, but a constant companion with unquestionable loyalty and conviction.

As Alex entered the room they had placed Elena in he saw she was already awake, the healer casting some more charms to determine how well her wound was healing. When she saw Alex enter the room she averted her eyes, unable to look him into his face. When he was finally standing next to her bed the healer had already left the room without a word. At first both were silent but then Alex heard

her murmur silently. "I am sorry. I was careless... I became a liability though I had sworn not to. I...I understand when you are upset about my inappropriate behavior."

Alex was startled by these word at first before he spoke to her calm and composed. "It was not your fault Elena. No one could have predicted Pajari to come and send someone to attack you. We all did not see it coming. Do not blame yourself."

Elena looked at him incredulous. "Pajari? Why would he... "

"He wanted revenge for what I did to him on the ship. But he knew attacking me in the open would get him and his family in real trouble so he decided to do the next best thing, to attack those close to me, in other words to hurt you." The tone of his voice was cold, thinking about the now dead conservative leaders actions still made him angry.

"I ... see. Still I am sorry, I had sworn to help you, not become a way for someone else to hurt you. I had sworn an oath but yet I am still useless to you." She still dared not look at him directly at any time, making him frown at her behavior.

"I told you it is not your fault, Pajari made a poor decision and payed for it with his life. If anyone should apologize it would be me. Ever since I first met you I was the reason you got hurt, emotionally and now even physically. Had we never met you would have been spared a lot. And things will get even more ugly in the future, I dislike the idea of it but I know that in the future people will get hurt and killed because of me, you will be no exception, Elena." His words shocked the young Veela. To see him blame himself for what had happened to her, it just seemed surreal.

"Without you I would be dead now Alex. You protected me when the others there would have killed me without hesitation. That's why I had sworn an oath to serve you. Not just because of fear but also gratitude." For the first time she looked at him, seeing the doubt in his face.

"I was never worthy of neither your trust nor your loyalty Elena. I was one of the attackers. I... I killed one of the Veela myself, with my own hands, I impaled her on my sword." He shuddered at the memory of his first time taking a life more then a year before.

"I know... I saw it from the window of my room before I hid in the wardrobe. The one you killed... her name was Marie, she was my older sister." She saw Alex shock at this revelation, he had not known in which way Elena was connected to the Veela he had killed. "Once in our avian form we Veela are even more effected by our emotions, sometimes we get into a rage unable to stop ourselves. She knew she would probably die when she attacked you but our nature prevented her from fleeing." Elena looked away, ashamed for her races flaws. "We wield much power in our avian form but we can barely control it..."

Alex looked at her in stunned silence, for some minutes neither of them spoke before Alex asked the one question that burned on his mind now. "Then why are you that loyal to me Elena? I killed your sister, you should loathe me."

"I should, by I never could. When I saw you, in your eyes I could see that you did not wish to kill. The eyes are a mirror of the soul and in yours I saw no malice at that point and I still don't see it now." Alex looked contemplative as he heard her words. The honesty in her voice surprised him. With one last squeeze on her shoulder he left her to think about what he had heard.

Kakaroff was currently in his office, the duel the day before had caused him a lot of trouble and loads of paperwork, but in the end he was sure it was worth his trouble. The Grindelwald family and their allies stood up for him and supported his decision to allow the duel, all in accordance to the old laws of course. He was just about to read another complaint from a worried family as a knock on his door interrupted his train of thought. After a short grunt as response his secretary stepped into his office. Despite what many wizards thought Kakaroff had never really regretted hiring an aide as it gave him more time to follow his own interests and plans during the school year.

"Headmaster a guest is here, demanding to see you. He claims he is an old acquaintance of yours." Before the woman got a response from Kakaroff a man in black robes shoved himself past her into the office.

"Igor, it has been ... quite some time since we last saw each other." Kakaroff scowled at his guests words. Of all people this man was the last he ever wished to see again, well one of the last people.

"Severus Snape... what gives me the pleasure of your visit. You have made no attempt at contacting me for many years now." Kakaroff did not even try to hide the acid in his voice, but his guest remained unaffected by it.

"Years indeed. Don't you think it is only natural that people avoid you after you tried to rat them out to the government?"

"You were just as involved in this whole mess as I was. You got your get of jail card as Dumbledores spy, I merely used my own tricks to avoid incarceration." Both men tried to stare the other down, but no one was getting the upper hand. "Now tell me why in the name of the dark lord you have come here, I know this is not about pleasantries."

"Very well straight to the point. I have no wish to stay here longer then necessary anyways. I was sent here by Dumbledore, he wants you to expel Grindelwald for killing another student. In his opinion a boy like him is a constant risk for the lives of all other students at this school." Severus sneered at the mention of Dumbledores request.

Kakaroff merely laughed at the request. "And you actually believe I would expel such an excellent student as him? He acted well within his rights. There is no reason for me to expel him." He saw Severus scowl even more, he knew the black haired man hated being ridiculed and Dumbledore had just forced him to ridicule himself in front of a man Snape considered to be a traitor. "I see why Dumbledore wants the boy out of Durmstrang though. Go back to your master like the loyal lapdog you are Severus. Tell the old fool that he will never get Grindelwald as a student at his school, not as long as I can prevent that." He smirked at the angered man before him. "And now get lost Severus, unlike you I have better things to do then do chores for a delusional old man that make myself look even more ridiculous." At this Snape stormed out of the office but not before Kakaroff yelled another thing after him fueling Snapes anger even more. "And Severus, go take a shower sometime your hair looks awful." Kakaroff still laughed long after Snape had left Durmstrang to report his failure to Dumbledore.

The next day Elena was released from the school's hospital, still a bit weakened from her wound, but healed none the less. She had to take it easy with her training for some time though, a fact that displeased her much. She and Alex had not talked about their past again after that morning in the hospital room, but their relationship returned to almost normal once she was out of hospital.

Another two weeks passed without major incidents. Though now many students openly tried to avoid the Grindelwald heir, most of them from upper years, especially those from the conservatives. But Alex cared little for the sixth and seventh years, to him they were already a lost cause as he had too little time to win them over anyways. The duel also had lasting effects on his special tutoring with Kakaroff and Krum. The former had informed him earlier about Dumbledores request much to the amusement of the teen. The latter had completely changed his attitude during their training. Though Krum was wary in the presence of Alex, he still was too stubborn to back down, he even felt challenged to improve faster, as he feared the younger boy could overpower him soon.

Like this most of December had passed by now and the Christmas holiday was about to start. All students were to leave for their homes in the holidays. But in the winter months the ship that brought them to Durmstrang was not safe enough to travel so a large number of portkeys was used to transport all of the students to Hamburg, exactly to the place where they had left at the beginning of the year.

After a few last words to his followers Alex and Elena left them to find Alex's parents, to their surprise though they did not find them but Martin waiting for them. "Yo kids. I'm here to take you home, come on."

"Martin? What the heck are you doing here, where are my parents?" Alex was slightly confused at that moment, though Elena looked pretty much the same.

"They had to attend some meeting with the minister, your mom was really pissed about the timing but in the end she had to accept it. Come now I don't want to stay here too long, it's supposed to rain today and I ain't wanna be outside when it starts." With this Martin turned around, followed by the still confused kids. After a short

walk they reached the apparition point at the port so Martin could take them home.

Finally at home Alex and Elenas luggage was quickly taken care of by the Grindelwald families house elves, while Martin got ready to leave. "See you around kids, if something happens you know I live just across the street. Later then." With this Martin left to go home. He had moved into a house near the Grindelwalds mansion some years ago, after marrying his school love when Alex was around 9 years old. Ever since then he had become a more serious man on his duties, the fact that he became a father only a year later also did its part and now Martin was no longer considered an impulsive fool, like in the past.

Many other close supporters of the Grindelwald family had also followed this example and moved to the small village in Bavaria so by now the village consisted almost completely of magical families. A few more years and it would be an entirely magical community, something that most of the magical families in the village would appreciate greatly.

Alex and Elena spent the few hours they were alone in the library, finishing their holiday homework early, though in Durmstrang homework was only a small part of the learning process since they put more emphasis on the practical use of magic, so no one would care if they didn't do their written homework as long as they were able to cast the spells right.

When his parents finally returned home Alex quickly found himself engulfed in a tight hug by his mother. Her relieve to see her son again, unharmed on top of that, was evident in her face and actions. Conrad only stood by the side watching the entire scene with an amused smirk. He could see Alex felt a little uneasy because of his mothers worry for him, though he said nothing about it. Elena nodded curtly to the adults before she left the room to give the family some privacy, despite knowing that no one really minded her presence at all.

"Selene, don't forget our son has to breathe once in a while. You should really release him." Conrad couldn't help but laugh at the sight of seeing his son struggle to get enough air in his mothers embrace. Selene though gave her husband a dark look, promising pain should he get in her way.

Hesitant Selene let go of her son, though her hands remained on his shoulders as she looked straight into his face. "Oh Alex, just what were you thinking. We send you to school to learn and what news do we get? You dueling to death with older students, Elena nearly getting killed by attacks and whatnot. I knew we should have never sent you to Durmstrang." Selenes voice was silent, almost a whisper to the end, at all times showing her worry for her sons well being.

"You know your father would have never allowed for Alex to be anywhere else but Durmstrang. And Alex did fine, he showed that people better not mess with him. You know I am really proud of how you handled yourself so far my son." Conrad looked at his son with pride, he also knew that the boys grandfather was equally pleased with his heirs current approach at conquering the school. Selene though gave her husband another dark look, not even commenting his words.

"You should go to bed now Alex, tomorrow we will talk, there is much to be done in the next two weeks that you spent at home. Rest now." With a soft smile Selene hugged her son again before releasing him to retire for the night. A great many things were about to happen to the boy and he would need to be at his full strength for it.

In Britain meanwhile one Albus Dumbledore was meeting one of his proteges. After hearing from Snape about Kakaroffs refusal to expel the Grindelwald boy from Durmstrang, Albus had now decided that a more direct approach was in order. For that reason he was meeting with his former student Sirius Black.

"Ah Sirius my boy, how are you doing these days?" Dumbledore used his best grandfatherly voice, smiling at the tall man who was currently seated opposite of him in the Black Manors study.

"I am fine professor. Not many things to do these days. There are so few Death Eaters left now that the rest of the lot is to scared to even leave the holes they are hiding in." A grim smile hushed over the mans face.

"Ah yes, you and James did a good job at catching all those dark wizards. It is a shame none of them ever gave us any clues to young

Harry's fate." A pained expression appeared on Sirius' face as Dumbledore spoke about his supposedly dead godson.

"Aye, but you are not here to talk about Death Eaters and Harry I presume. So what can I help you with at such a late hour." This got the old wizard to sigh, Dumbledore had not intended to get to the point directly, but Sirius left him little choice but to be blunt.

"Yes Sirius. You heard about recent events in the Durmstrang school I presume?" Dumbledore waited a moment to see Sirius nod. "This entire event was centered around a young man called Alexander Grindelwald, and yes Sirius he is really the grandson of the dark lord I defeated nearly 45 years ago. I fear this school will lead the boy on the same dark path his grandfather had taken, but his family had stubbornly insisted on sending young Alexander there instead of Hogwarts where he could have been taught the right ways to use his powers." At this Dumbledore made another break, waiting for Sirius' response.

"And what exactly has that to do with your visit to me, professor? I am not in any way acquainted with the boy or his family." Sirius was confused as to why the old wizard was telling him these things.

"Ah yes, I was just about to get to that point. You must know the boy and his parents are invited to the winter ball at the German ministry of magic in Berlin." Before Dumbledore could continue Sirius interrupted him.

"Ah the ball that my wife and I are conveniently invited to, while you were not invited as it seems. Is that why you are here, to get me to talk the boy in switching schools?" Sirius was unsure whether the old man had finally lost it or he was simply missing some important information.

"Not entirely correct my boy. I will accompany you and your lovely wife to this event and talk to the boy myself, I simply need you and your wife to keep his parents away while I make the boy see reason to come to Hogwarts."

"You know that you are not very welcome there professor. Should they see you try to do anything to the boy to influence him this could lead to serious problems for our country." Sirius was sure this would get them all into big trouble and all that for one boy.

"But Sirius, I would never do anything except talk to the boy. I was told he is very bright and mature for his age, he will surely see reason." He gave Sirius his slightly disappointed grandfatherly look, knowing that this would get his protege to consent with his plans in most cases.

This was where Sirius finally gave in, though not without warning Dumbledore that in case he would cause a scene he would be on his own. Satisfied with the outcome the headmaster of Hogwarts left the Black Mansion to go and prepare himself to coax the boy to change schools.

The next morning in Bavaria gave Alex the chance to resume his training in a more familiar scenery. For the first time in almost four months he could do his entire workout in the rural area around his families mansion, only now he realized how much he actually had missed this place. Elena joined his training though she had to quit far earlier then he had to since she was still a bit weakened from her wound.

A little later Alex, Elena and his family were seated around the kitchen table, enjoying breakfast together. This was when Conrad finally decided to tell his son about an upcoming event that would be of great importance for him and his family.

"So my son, there is something we have to talk about. As you know your mother and I had been to the ministry yesterday until late. This has not been without reason I can assure you." At this Alex looked at his father with curiosity written all over his face. Even Elena could not hide her obvious interest though she tried to hide her emotions and all in front of the Grindelwald family, something that still disturbed Selene greatly.

"Has something important happened in the politics recently? We are not really told much about the outside world while we are at school. The headmaster once told me he finds such things too... distracting for students."

"Indeed. I have been nominated as the next head for the department of national security. The current department head will retire early next year and now they are trying to find a replacement. Needless to say that your grandfather has ordered me to do my best to get that

position, influencing all the aurors and such would be most beneficial for our family and our cause." Conrad saw his son simply nod at this, Alex looked more contemplative now.

"And how exactly have they come to nominate you for the position father. I do not mean to be disrespectful but you are not an auror or in any other way connected to a ministry position at the moment."

"Yes, but you know we have some very influential friends in the ministry, the minister himself is one of those who still believe in your grandfathers dream of an ideal society for us all. There is no law saying only ministry personal is allowed to be nominated so they chose me, there are two other candidates though, but they are only there so it won't look like nepotism." Alex couldn't help but chuckle in amusement at hearing how the ministry truly worked. Corruption and favoritism were the best ways to get influence and power, something Alex made sure to remember for future encounters with the ministry.

"Because of this we have also been invited to an important ministry event next week. The winter ball. Many important families from Germany and its allied countries will be present. And you will accompany us as well Alex." For the first time Selene participated in the conversation, topics like a grand ball were much more to her liking then politics and corruption. "It is a pity though that Elena will not be able to come with us, don't give me that look Alex this is on the doctors order, she is still ordered to take it easy after her wound, such deep cuts are always tricky." Alex briefly looked at Elena but after seeing her nod in consent to his mothers words he directed his attention back to his parents.

"You have been taught how to dance in the past, there will be quite a few young ladies from important families there as well. It would be wise for you to entertain them a bit and start looking for a potential girl to share your future, I know you are only eleven but those families will most likely instruct their daughters to do the same. Marriage is still the best way to secure alliances with political allies." At Conrads words Alex paled a bit, he was not really sure whether he would like being at that ball at all, as long as it would be for such reasons he had to come along. Selene though looked at her husband a bit indignant, clearly seeing her son to be too young to even consider anything like political marriages. After this Selene did her best to steer the conversation away from that particular topic more to other important things Alex still had to be made aware of.

The next few days passed for Alex with nearly endless lessons in proper etiquette, even more dancing lessons and special preparations for the ball with his father. They had been handed a complete guest list for the ball and so father and son were now reviewing all their informations they currently had on the other guests. Conrad wanted to prepare his son for all eventualities that could arise that evening, so his son would leave a good impression on the ruling society of central and eastern Europe. Any mistake could have dire consequences, politics was an unforgiving game after all.

So another chapter done, next chapter comes the ball and Alex first real experience with politics.

Some may be concerned that I would start a senseless Dumbledore bashing or anything of the sorts, please rest assured that is not my intention. The old man truly believes that he has to keep young Alexander on the right path and only his desire to change the boy for the better dictates his actions. He is neither evil, nor demented nor overly manipulative. Well maybe a bit manipulative but on an equal level like he was in canon.

Okay that's it so far for today. Please leave lots of Reviews so I know whether you people like it or not.

Chapter 9: What we sacrifice

The German ministry was an interesting sight for those who visited it for the first time in their lives. Unlike the British, the German ministry was not really hidden, it was a large building complex in a classical style, plain visible to everyone. Located a bit outside of Berlin the entire place with its large gardens surrounding it was a truly majestic sight. The fact that the ministry was not hidden from muggles at all was also a major reason why the workers at the ministry here were ordered to wear muggle like clothing, to draw no suspicion.

The ball today was held in a side wing of the building, a huge room only dedicated to serve for this purpose. The setting was more then fitting for an event with some of the most important people from all over Europe.

When Alex followed his parents into the huge ballroom at the ministry he was awed. The room was decorated mostly in white, the walls and ceiling seemed to glow, softly emitting light to the room, no other source of light visible. At one end a large number of tables was set, ready for the more then 200 invited guests this evening. On the other end there was a stage with a small orchestra playing music in front of a large dance floor. Alex shuddered when he saw the white marble they had used for the floor. It looked kind of slippery, oh he hoped not to make a fool of himself and fall on his nose while dancing.

Not long after they had entered they were already approached by a man with dark blond hair, wearing a tuxedo. "Ah Conrad, I'm so glad you could make it." The man shook his fathers hand with a little too much enthusiasm, but he seemed to be rather friendly. "Ah and your beautiful wife, as always it is an honor Lady Grindelwald." He bowed slightly and kissed the knuckles of Selenes outstretched hand. Then he turned to Alex. "And this must be your son, you have given some of us here quite some headaches these last weeks." Alex looked at the man inquisitive. His father saw this and answered his sons unasked question.

"Alex this man Heinrich Falkenstein, the current German minister for magic and an old family friend." At this the man looked a bit abashed, he had not realized that the boy had never met him before and so he had not introduced himself properly.

Alex nodded curtly at the man. "It's an honor to meet you sir. Surely not many my age get such a chance." A bit of politeness often goes a long way, or at least Alex thought that was how the old saying goes. The minister looked approvingly at the young Grindelwald before he spoke again.

"Ah, such a well mannered young son you have Conrad. Please come with me, I will introduce you to some of the other more important guests." Alex and his parents followed the man. The introductions were brief, they met some of the more powerful families in the country, some high standing ministry officials, important foreign guests and of course, much to Alex displeasure their young daughters. But at least they moved on quickly until they finally stopped with the last people the minister wished to introduce and to no ones surprise it was his own wife and his daughter that came last.

"Ah you already know my lovely wife Cassandra. And this is our beloved daughter Lilith. Maybe you know her Alexander, you are both first years at Durmstrang." The minister gave Alex a benevolent smile, but before Alex could answer the ministers daughter beat him to it.

"Know yes, but not very well, father. As we follow different... hobbies in our free time we have hardly spoken a word with each other these first months of the school year." Her father looked a bit disappointed at this, but quickly regained his cheerful demeanor.

"Of course." Then the minister turned to the other adults. "Why don't we go over there to talk a bit, so the children can get to know each other and enjoy this evening to their fullest. Surely they would only be bored by the things we would discuss." Alex felt a bit annoyed by this statement. He was here for political reasons and nothing else. But to his shock his parents seemed to agree and quickly left the two children.

He resigned to his fate and turned to the girl next to him. Yes he had seen her before, but she was one of the few that had never shown any interest in his agenda. She had shoulder length, wavy brown hair and emerald green eyes looking at Alex with some sort of curiosity. "You are right we never really got any chance to talk. Unlike most of our classmates you seemed to distance yourself from the

rest of us, why could that be." He looked at her as she arched an eyebrow at his question,

"Unlike the rest of our 'classmates' I have no intention in becoming one of your goons. And the way you try to impress others is less than... appealing to me." He couldn't help but chuckle at her response.

"Ah my ways. And what ways in particular are you playing at?"

"Well unlike you I wish to have a peaceful school life, without beheading my opponents in a public setting." She shuddered a bit as she talked about Pajaris end, clearly showing her disgust.

"Pajari just got what he deserved. And believe me, Lilith, I would have rather chosen a different approach. Killing is only the last resort to dispose of a political obstacle." Lilith looked rather unconvinced at his words, but before she could say any more their attention wandered to a bit of commotion at the other side of the room.

Sirius Black was already annoyed, he was really looking forward to enjoying this evening and meeting some old friends again, but the old man that had insisted on accompanying him had already caused trouble.

"I am sorry sir, but you are not on the guest list. Please move aside so the guests can enter the room." The man at the entrance to the ballroom seemed unwilling to let Dumbledore enter the room, much to the old mans annoyance.

"Ah but surely you can make an exception, I am Albus Dumbledore after all, Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards." In his best grandfatherly voice the old wizard tried to convince the guard, but again to no avail. "And I am here along with Mr Black, surely you wouldn't hold him and his company back from entering." At this Sirius shot the old man a really pissed of look, he just had to get him into this mess.

"I am sorry sir, no exceptions. Only invited guests. Please..." Before the man could continue he was interrupted by the minister, who had just appeared at the entrance.

"It is alright, you can let him in Robert. I hope you are not here to cause any trouble Mr Dumbledore, else you will have to face serious consequences in front of the ICW, Supreme Mugwup or not." With this the minister turned around and reentered the ball room, closely followed by Dumbledore and the Blacks.

Loud murmuring began as people saw Dumbledore enter the room. The old wizard had never been really famous in Germany and most of eastern Europe, his pompous insistence on banning all magic he deemed dark had only been supported in his own country so far. Most people here still believed that there was more then the black and white world of Albus Dumbledore, but that was something the old man never understood. This lead him to accuse many important European families of being dark what caused him many enemies, some of those even present at the very moment.

Alex frowned when he saw the old man enter the ballroom. He already knew why this man was here the very moment he saw him. Seeing Alex reaction to Dumbledores presence Lilith shot him a questioning look. "Lets just say that he and I had some ... disagreements in the past. I would rather not talk to the likes of him, but I guess I seem to attract lunatics." Alex shook his head slightly as Lilith had to stifle a laugh.

"I guess that is a given with your name. Everyone wants something from the heir of Gellert Grindelwald I suppose." She smiled slightly at him but the smile faded as he arched an eyebrow because of her remark.

"So everyone does... and what is that you want from me, dear Lilith." For once Alex was truly curious about what someone at this party thought of him, somehow this girl intrigued him, she seemed to be more then just the daughter of some important family, more then the rest of the girls here that only strife to become the wife of someone important as the main goal in their lives.

"The answer is simple. I want answers. You and your goals are an enigma for me, a puzzle I intend to solve." A mischievous grin spread across her face as she saw his surprised face.

Alex wanted her to clarify what she meant with this, but to his dismay the chance to do this was lost as the one person he wanted to talk to least approached him, with an knowing grandfatherly smile.

Alex wanted to leave the room to avoid this man, but would not run away from anything, his grandfather would scold and punish him should he show such cowardice in front of Dumbledore of all persons. Also Lilith was still with him and it would be seen as rude to just leave her or so he believed to remember from his etiquette lessons with his mother.

"Ah, Alexander my boy. How good to see you this evening." Dumbledore looked benevolently at the young boy, undeterred by the obvious dislike the boy showed in his eyes.

"Good evening Mr Dumbledore." Alex forced these words out, not really wanting to converse with this man. "I would ask you to refrain from calling me by my given name, that is a privilege I grant only to my friends and family and as you are neither of those you would do well to not affront me with such disrespect." At these words Dumbledore looked a bit taken aback, but he continued his plans to win the boy over none the less.

"Yes of course. Forgive this old man Mr Grindelwald, dealing with children in my position as Headmaster made it almost natural for me to refer to students by their given name."

"And to your dismay I am not one of your students, so please do not talk to me in the way you would to them. But I wonder, why is it that you approached me this evening. I was enjoying my conversation with this young lady as you interrupted us." At this Dumbledore looked at Lilith as though he had just realized that there was someone else present at the moment. Lilith though just smirked at the way Alex handled one the supposedly most powerful wizards of their time.

Dumbledore was silent for a short moment before he spoke again, still completely ignoring Lilith. "You must forgive me for this, but I think we should really talk, in private if possible. It may be imperative for your future I can assure you."

"I feel perfectly alright, if there is anything you feel uncomfortable to talk about at this place I would advise you to approach my parents for a later meeting since I don't wish to talk about any such things when I am here to enjoy myself." Alex tried to sound as civil as possible, though his patience was running short at the moment. This was when he felt a probing against his mind shields. "And I would

advise you to cease your attempts to read my mind this instant. Poking around in other peoples mind without their consent is considered a crime in this country. I don't know how you handle this in Britain but here it is seen akin to rape and punished accordingly."

Alex looked at Dumbledore with pure contempt as the old man tried to use such tricks to gain an advantage against the boy. Lilith simply glared at the old man, she was sure to bring this up to her father, how could anyone let such a dangerous man like Dumbledore anywhere near children at all.

Shocked that the boy had sensed his probing Dumbledore ceased his attempt, looking at Alex scar with great interest, paying no real attention to the boys further words. Somehow this scar oozed dark energy like a curse. "Would you tell me where you got that particular scar Mr Grindelwald."

Alex absent unconsciously placed a hand on his scar, while Lilith looked at him with great interest, the same question was among the things she wanted to ask him herself. "This scar is a reminder, given to me by my... mentor. Meant to remind me that no matter how far I get, there will always be someone ahead of me." He vividly remembered the day his grandfather gave him this scar, one of the few truly painful memories of his childhood so far.

Dumbledore looked shocked at these words, before he replied with a worried tone. "Durmstrang is a truly harsh place for a young man such as yourself when the teachers there are allowed to physically punish the students." Alex looked at Dumbledore with mixed feelings, on the one hand he was glad the old man had not suspected his grandfathers involvement but on the other hand he was angry that Dumbledore had the audacity to assume such things about his school. But before he could reply, the old man continued with his ramblings. "But if you were at Hogwarts instead, I could personally assure you that..."

"Assure him of what Albus? That you can be quite stubborn in your believes about what is right and wrong?" At this moment Alex really wanted to bang his head against the next wall. Just what he needed, another person he wished to avoid this evening had come to interrupt.

"Igor, you know exactly what I mean. The way you lead your school is beyond cruel. To allow the students to attack each other and duel each other to death, such things would never happen at Hogwarts." Dumbledore looked at his Durmstrang counterpart with contempt.

"You fail to see two things Dumbledore. One the boy was well within his legal right to kill that fool after a direct attack on one of his retainers and more importantly the boy and his parents chose Durmstrang for his education, as they most definitely don't trust you." Kakaroff ended with a superior smirk on his face, seeing the look Dumbledore gave him.

Dumbledore was just about to give him another peace of his mind as Lilith could hear Alex groan, a hand on his forehead, looking at the whole scene with disdain. It was easy to tell that he wanted to be anywhere else but near these two bickering men and frankly she wanted the same.

"Alexander, I wish to dance. I happen to know that the next song is just perfect for us." She looked at him expectantly. He gave her a look of gratitude as he understood why she did this.

"Of course, forgive my inattentiveness, I should have danced with you earlier." She took his offered arm and they both walked off. She could see him mouth a silent thank you to her which she rewarded with a winning smile. The two bickering headmasters though had not yet realized that the reason for their dispute had just left them.

In another part of the room one Sirius Black had just finished his round greeting his acquaintances as he and his wife happened upon Alex parents and the minister. "Good evening Minister Falkenstein, Mr Jaeger, Mrs Grindelwald." He greeted these people with a respectful tone, unlike his former mentor he was willing to give them the a chance to show their true colors and so far no one could report anything bad about the Grindelwald family.

"Ah Lord Black and this must be you wife Helena if I remember correct." Sirius nodded at the minister. "It is good to see that at least some british families stand above Dumbledores false accusations."

"Not all of us are like this, Professor Dumbledore holds less influence on the powerful families in Britain then you might think."

"That is good to hear. The rift that the war had created seemed almost too big for anyone to bring all of Europe's magical communities back together." Conrad looked at Sirius with a neutral expression, the man was still known for his involvement with Dumbledore, being called one of his closest proteges in the past. But still he seemed not as biased as the old man.

"Indeed, it would be better if we would stop living in the past and move on, but alas there are still too many obstacles for this to happen anytime soon." Just as Sirius was to speak up again some commotion from another part of the room drew the attention away from their conversation.

On the other side of the room a group of aurors had all hands full with separating two bickering men, one being Igor Kakaroff, who was known for his temper, but the other, much to the amusement of everyone was Albus Dumbledore. Whatever the two headmasters had been talking about before, it definitely flared up both their tempers. The aurors looked pleadingly in the direction of the minister, waiting for his orders. One quick motion of his hand was enough for them to understand his intentions and the aurors lead both headmasters out of the room through different exits.

On the dance floor two young teens watched the scene with equal amusement like the rest of the guests while moving slowly to the music.

"Now that was something different. And I already thought this evening would be dull." Lilith watched with a small grin as the headmasters were lead outside.

"My my and I thought you enjoyed my company dear Lilith, alas there must be a reason why you kept to yourself in school." Alex mock pouted, but soon after started chuckling as Lilith gave him a small glare. "Alright another topic. But you are right on one thing I sure did not expect those two to make a scene here. I knew of the headmasters temper but Dumbledore always plays his role of the benevolent old man, must be a shock to the people to see him so enraged."

"I don't know either of them very well. Only you and Krum could tell anything about Kakaroff, being his favorite private students and all."

"What, are you jealous dear Lilith? Is that why you never show any interest in joining any group?"

"In your dreams. Being with your group is dangerous, you mean trouble wherever you go. Being in any other group would mean to stand against yours, again this will only result in trouble. You have already proven how far you are willing to go and quite frankly I don't trust killers." She looked at him with so much distrust that it shocked Alex for a moment, enough for him to almost trip during the ongoing dance.

"Believe me I don't enjoy killing, but Pajari had it coming. At least his death will save the lives of many others who are discouraged to act now. I would rather be a normal eleven year old with normal hobbies but I can't. None of us can, our world won't let us and you know it. Be strong and rule or be weak and fall victim to the world we live in. You can't hide forever Lilith." With this they finished dancing and Alex lead Lilith back to her parents before he bowed and departed, but not without telling her some parting words. "Don't forget we all play a role Lilith, we have our masks and our burdens to carry. Don't assume you know the one and only truth. Soon you will understand why I do things the way they have to be, then you will find the answers to solve your enigma." He nodded to the minister and his wife, then to his parents nearby before he left them to take a walk outside to clear his head, oh how he already hated these kind of events and he knew there would be many more following this one.

It was around midnight when Alex and his parents finally returned to their home. Conrad was quite pleased with how the evening had progressed, with the ministers help and the people he had met today he would get the post of the department head for national security. Also watching Dumbledore making a fool of himself was quite worth being there. Conrad also made a mental note to send his thanks to headmaster Kakaroff for keeping Dumbledore away from his son, though he knew the Durmstrang headmaster had his own reasons for doing so, but he did them a favor none the less. As they were all quite exhausted at the moment they all went to bed, keeping their discussions of the evening for a later date.

The next few days passed rather uneventful for Alex, Christmas came and went, not really causing him any form of over exaggerated joy like so many others his age felt when they thought about these

particulars days and the presents that came with them. Somehow his own words he had said to Lilith haunted him now.

Alex was currently sitting in the study of his families house, watching the cracking fire in the fireplace. Elena sat nearby, meditating as part of her Occlumancy training to strengthen the shields around her mind. Alex heaved a deep sigh as he kept on pondering the same thought again and again.

"What troubles you Alex, you have been acting so strange lately." Without him noticing Selene had entered the room and placed a hand on her sons shoulder looking at him, worry for her son evident in her eyes.

"I wonder, mother. What would my life have been like hadn't I been born as the grandson of the oh so great Gellert Grindelwald. Would I have been able to live a normal life like so many other children my age are allowed to?" His eyes never strayed from the fire, else he would have seen the sadness in his mothers face as she knelt beside him or Elenas worried look in his direction.

"Oh Alex, you don't know how much I wished we could spare you all this. You don't know how often I had prayed that you would be able to escape this madness, but fate dictated our lives otherwise. From the very moment I found out who my father was everything changed. All the expectations, the way people looked at me all of a sudden, some with awe and adoration others with hate and malice." Selene looked at the fire while she said this, sadness and a bit of bitterness hung in her voice.

Elena watched the scene between mother and son, shortly pondering whether she should leave to give them some privacy but decided against it as she feared she would interrupt them when she stood up.

"At least you grew up without this. You were already 21 when you found out. I am denied a normal childhood. I don't want to fight, to hate others because they don't follow my own beliefs. I don't want to kill. But no matter what I want my life is screwed up because of my last name, because of what my grandfather did. I will never know what a normal life would be like, the very moment I leave this house I have to be Alexander Grindelwald, the strong and charismatic heir of Gellert Grindelwald, never showing weakness or hesitation. A

mask I will always have to wear for the rest of my life." He spat the last words with anger.

"Yes I grew up outside of my fathers shadow, but my life lacked something that yours will always have Alex. Do you know what that is?" Selene looked at her son intently, seeing the trouble he faced in his eyes as he looked at her. He said nothing, he simply shook his head, showing he did not know what his mother meant. "Unlike you Alex, I grew up thinking I was an orphan. I never knew my parents during my childhood, never knowing the love of a family. That is something you will always have and something no one will ever be able to take away from you." With this Selene embraced her son, holding him tightly. From time to time she felt guilt when she held her son, knowing that they had taken him away from his real family in the past. But in moments like this all these feeling disappeared and she knew that Alex was her son, only hers and no one could take that family bond from them.

Some moments earlier Conrad had also entered the room, listening to his wife and his son, speechless as he felt guilty as well, though on his part only because of what burden he had forced upon his son.

"You are right mom. You always are. But I will not follow the path others want me to take. I will make my own way, forge my own destiny and future. I vow I will create a place where my own children will one day be able to grow up without these burdens I have to face, I will bring peace to their future." He spoke with so much conviction, no one would doubt it. He also looked over to Elena who sat silently near them watching he scene. "And also for you Elena. I will create a place where no one will have to think about what race the other person is from. I will either create such a future for all of us or go down trying, so I vow."

Elena just sat there, speechless. She couldn't believe that he would also care about her future as well. To her she was always just his servant, nothing more but as it seemed he felt true friendship for her. She wanted to say something, but no words came. In the end she couldn't say anything as another voice interrupted this moment.

"An honorable goal my son. And one most difficult to achieve as well. If you truly wish to succeed with this you will need more people to share your dream. You will need supporters within the right positions, with power to help you. And you need to be strong enough to defend

your dream against all those who dare to oppose you. Are you truly ready to commit yourself to something like this? Following your grandfathers plan would be easier and give you power as well." Conrad looked at his son with a firm gaze, waiting for Alex reply.

"I will not go back on my words. I will create this future. And no one, not even grandfather will be able to stop me." The resolve in his voice left no doubt of his own conviction. Selene still held her son close as she looked at her husband and saw his pleased expression on his face.

"So be it son. Come, there is much to do and even more for you to learn. You come as well Elena, I am sure you will support Alex to the best of your abilities so we will prepare you as well." With this Conrad left, soon followed by his son and Elena, leaving Selene alone in the room.

"I truly hope you will find your own happiness this way my son. It would break my heart to see you hurt and all that awaits you on your path now will be hurt and conflict." Selene whispered to herself, wiping away some tears as she thought about the hardships her son will have to face. But just as her son will find his way she vowed to herself to never leave her child alone, to support him and be there for him when he needs his family as a retreat from the harsh world they were living in.

Yeah I know this chapter was a bit... strange. But there are many things that I wished to express with this chapter, though I am not sure whether it worked or not.

First I wanted to introduce one of the last major Ocs for Alex time in Durmstrang. Lilith will be quite different from what some would expect from a ministers daughter but you will see that in later chapters.

Second I wanted to show that Dumbledore and Kakaroff are rivals of some sort, Dumbledore representing the 'Light' side with his believes and teaching methods while Kakaroff is more of a dark character and so both headmasters will be at odds because of many things, Alex place of education just being one of these things. In the books both headmasters seemed to be at a rather unsteady truce during the tournament but that tournament has yet to come.

Third, about Sirius involvement in this chapter. I wanted to show that he is not nearly as much a Dumbledore fanatic like the Weasleys for example. While he may have looked up Albus in his younger years at school, I want Sirius to be a more open minded person that sees the fault in Dumbledores narrow minded perception of light and dark.

And last about Alex and his mother Selene. I haven't written much about Selenes background so far, I will give information on her childhood and why she grew up as an orphan not knowing about her father as the story progresses. Selenes motherly bond to her son will play an important role for Alex future development and I hope that I can depict the family relationship in Alex family in a conceivable and realistic way.

Okay so much for what I wanted to say for the moment. Next chapter the kids will return to school to bring their first year to an end so just wait a bit, I will try to finish the next chapter quicker then I finished this one.

And as always please leave a Review, the only chapter were people left more then 1-2 Reviews was the one I had Alex kill Pajari, don't tell me I have to kill people every chapter to get a reaction from my readers.

Chapter 10: Influence

Albus Dumbledore was not happy this day. The outcome of his visit to the ball at the German ministry of magic was worse than he had feared. He had not just failed to gain the Grindelwald heir as a student for his school but also allowed himself to be humiliated by starting a fight with the Durmstrang headmaster Igor Kakaroff. And of course the Daily Prophet had completely omitted Kakaroff being the one who started this and so the newspaper had an entire site dedicated at how much Albus Dumbledore had shamed his nation with his behavior.

Currently there were several persons with him in his office at Hogwarts, all sworn members of the Order of the Phoenix, loyal to the light and with this absolutely loyal to him. "My friends as you all know my latest attempt at saving the Grindelwald heir from the dark path he has been set on has been less than successful. But we must not give up, we must save this boy from the clutches of those who will only corrupt him. He has already started practicing the dark arts at Durmstrang, I could feel the dark magic in his presence, but it is not too late to redeem him." All around him looked rather unconvinced, but no one dared to speak out against the headmaster's plans for the Grindelwald heir. "I called you here because I have a new mission for all of you. Each of you has contacts, friends and family on the mainland and I want you to use these contacts to gather information on the boy and his family. Any information will contribute to our victory over the dark wizards that try to destroy our way of life." With this he dismissed the group, planning his next step in getting the boy to join him.

It was a freezing cold Monday on the 15th January 1990 when the students of Durmstrang gathered once more in the great hall of their school, ready for the beginning of the second term of their school year. As always the meal was a quiet affair, though some of the students and teachers were talking in hushed voices, the topic of their common interest the absence of a number of students. Out of the 349 students almost forty had not come back after their winter holiday, the main reason being the recent death of another student in a duel on the school grounds.

Seeing the uneasy atmosphere, Headmaster Igor Kakaroff decided to speak to his students, though everyone could easily read in his face that he was not happy with this duty. "Another old year has died

to allow a new one to start and with this new year also the your second term of education here has started. All of you would be well advised to study hard, the tests in the coming months will not be easy and mistakes are inexcusable." He looked around, seeing that by now he had the complete attention of all present persons.

"But when you look to your left and right you will without doubt see that some places have remained empty this evening. 38 of your fellow students have quit their education here, due to their irresponsible fear to be faced with the consequences of their actions. Such cowardice is unbecoming of a student of this old and honorable school." He put all the disdain he could muster into the word cowardice, so everyone would get his opinion on the subject at hand.

"The death of your fellow classmate was a sad reminder that you will always have to live with the outcome of your decisions. Learn this lesson today and you might be able to avoid a similar fate as it has befallen Pajari. Show strength and conviction, not fear like the cowards that have abandoned their education here and you will succeed not just here but in your later life as well. Remember this... begone for now, tomorrow your classes will resume as planned." With a wave of his hand he made it clear that this was an order, not an option. Kakaroff quickly left the room, but not without looking intently at the young Grindelwald, the boy was like a double edged sword for him. But Kakaroff had already chosen his course of action with the boy, it was his only chance at survival once his past would catch up to him, troubles and consequences be damned.

Alex walked out of the great hall quietly, contemplating the newest ramifications of his duel with Pajari. As always Elena, Benedikt and Ivanna were following him closely, some more of the students that supported him followed a bit more distant to the group.

"So how was your Christmas, bo... Alex?" Benedikt looked at Alex with his usual grin, his ever happy attitude seemingly eased Alex tension.

"Quite fine, I guess. I had to attend the ministers ball, I really hate these kind of events. Too much deceit and ass kissing for what I like. People pretending to be friends just for the sake of gaining some sort of advantage on the political stage... and that is the way most of our nations are ruled." Alex shook his head at the thought. "But

otherwise the holiday was fine, but some training done, and prepared for the next exams coming in February. What about you guys?" Alex looked at the Kasakow twins, Benedikt being all jumpy about his holiday, but Ivanna seemed much more somber than her brother.

Alex looked at Ivanna with an arched eyebrow, paying no real attention to her brother while he wondered why the girl seemed much less thrilled about the past weeks. "Ivanna? Are you alright?" Ivanna seemed lost in her thoughts, not even hearing Alex question. When Alex stepped closer to her and placed a hand on her shoulder she suddenly jerked away with a small yelp, startling everyone around her.

"Hey are you alright Ivanna?" Alex looked at her worriedly, while Ivanna looked unsure of what to do. Benedikt looked at his sister, when she met his gaze she slightly shook her head before quickly heading to her room in the dorm, only Benedikt really noticed the gesture before he answered Alex question for his sister.

"Don't worry Alex, my sister is alright. She kind of... hurt her shoulder during training... I went to far one time and now its a bit bruised and sore, nothing to worry about. Just try not to touch the wounded shoulder until its completely healed..." Benedikts hastily spoken words made it really look like he was sort of embarrassed of the incident.

"Ah alright, you really should have said so earlier. Please tell your sister I'm sorry Benedikt. " Alex was somewhat satisfied with the explanation and paid no more attention to the topic, making Benedikt breath a sigh of relieve. Elena though looked rather unconvinced, she would try to find out the truth later, something seemed to be off and she would find out what. Elena couldn't tolerate any secrets being kept from Alex, as such things could stand in between him and his dream, their dream.

A brown haired girl emerged from the crowd that had formed around Alex and his closest friends walking past Alex, only stopping briefly. She turned her head towards Alex as she spoke in a calm voice. "And you still say you don't want attention Alexander? Doesn't seem that way to me." Without waiting for a reply she went on.

"Ah dear Lilith you wound me with your words. I told you I don't seek attention, it seems to seek me." Lilith simply shook her head disbelievably, not even once looking at back at him while she walked towards the dorms herself. This way no one could see the small smile grace her lips when she thought about the young Grindelwalds banter.

"Since when do you know Ms Better-off-alone, Alex?" Benedikt looked surprised at his friend, most people around him did so as well, waiting for a reply.

"Ministers winter ball. We had a nice chat until Dumbledore butted in, we danced a bit and so on. She spared me from having to spent any time with some of the airhead pureblood girls at the ball." With a shrug Alex continued on his way to the dorms, feeling sleepy. He already knew that the next day would be strenuous, training with Kakaroff and Victor first thing of the day was always taxing.

When Alex calmly walked into the headmasters private training room the next day he found Kakaroff already waiting for him, though Alex was quite early this day. After the usual training routine with the other students he had decided to cut breakfast short and continue his training schedule that his father had started with him during the holidays. But now with Kakaroff already there he would just have to wait and see what the older man had planed for him.

"Good morning headmaster." Alex bowed his head slightly to Kakaroff, enough to be respectful without showing any sign of submission to the man.

Kakaroff did not reply, he simply sat there on a conjured chair watching his young student. The headmasters lack of interest in any form of conversation was unnerving, but Alex simply saw it as a chance to do his own training until Victor would show up. The usual training dummy on the far side of the room had to endure almost half an hour of spell barrages thrown at him by the young Grindelwald, always under the watchful eye of the headmaster.

"You take your training seriously, very good Alexander. There are many enemies out there waiting for a sign of weakness to strike you down. One of your enemies you have already had the 'pleasure' of meeting." Kakaroffs sudden words surprised Alex, but he fought down any urges to jump and forced a calm expression on his face.

"You mean Dumbledore. Yes he is becoming quite a nuisance in my life." Alex would have rather talked about other things but the troublesome self appointed leader of the light.

"He is out for you, he defeated your grandfather and believes it is well within his right to dictate the way you grow up and what you learn along the way to find your place in life. He is resourceful, he has many powerful wizards at his disposal and will use whatever means necessary to obtain what he believes to be his. The confrontation at the ball will not be the last time you had to face him." Kakaroff's words were true, Alex could not deny Dumbledores strange interest in his life and the ball wasn't the first time Dumbledore had tried to separate him from his family and friends.

"That is why I am going through a hard training schedule. My parents also found it beneficial to have me trained in all possible aspects, magical, physical and also mental. Dumbledore already made an attempt at reading my mind, proving that the need for such training is very much real." Alex watched Kakaroff's reaction to this, but the older man showed not much of a reaction to this revelation. He probably had already expected this to happen, he knew Dumbledore much better than Alex could even dream of at the moment.

"But it is not just me who gets through this training. Elena, the girl you often refer to as my retainer, lives with us and trains alongside me to support me in the battles that will await me in the future." Kakaroff looked somewhat surprised at this revelation. So far he had seen her to be somewhat of a close friend of him, but that she actually lives with the Grindelwalds came as a surprise to the usually well informed headmaster of Durmstrang.

"Is this girl trustworthy? I suppose you know very well what she is. Ms Dupont is not human, how can be sure she wouldn't betray you at the first chance given?" Kakaroff spoke with disdain and distrust of Elena. Alex knew the fact that Kakaroff had first objected letting a Veela join Durmstrang and had to be convinced by some influential people before giving his consent.

"She is trustworthy, in fact there is not a second person in this school I would trust nearly as unconditional as I trust her. She is loyal, strong and able." Alex spoke with conviction of his friend. He

had once ruined her life and he would be damned if he let anyone else do it again.

"Is that so? So tell me why you trust her like this. Dark creatures are usually... vicious." Kakaroff fixed his student with a firm gaze, making clear that this was an order and not a request.

In another part of the school, Elena and the Kasakow twins were currently waiting for professor Kumiega to start her lesson. First lesson after holidays were always meant to revise the spells and tactics learned in the first term of the school year and today would be no different.

There was no need to wait for long as the young professor soon walked into the room, he black hair kept in a messy ponytail to keep it out of her face. "Good morning class, you all know the drill. Today we will revise what you have learned before, therefore you will get yourself a partner and start dueling, be mindful of your surrounding and try not to hit other students except your partner."

Quickly the students came together with the partner of their choice, Benedict tried to get to his sister but was held back by Elenas hand on his shoulder. "I think it would be better you find another partner Benedikt. You have already done enough damage to your sister in your holiday training." Benedikt looked unsure of what to do, but seeing Elena not giving in on this topic he had no choice but to find another first year to duel.

Elena stepped closer to Ivanna and lead her to a more secluded spot of the room. "Now tell me Ivanna, what are you and your brother hiding from Alex? I know that your story about Benedict hurting you during training is fabricated, he would rather hit himself before he used any really harmful spell against you."

Ivanna suddenly paled at Elenas words and could barely dodge the first wave of weak spells sent at her by the Veela. "I don't know w..what you mean, Elena. Were aren't hiding anything." Ivanna spoke hastily, stuttering a bit.

Elena looked rather unconvinced and became impatient. She had promised Alex to support him and any lie could jeopardize their dream. "You are not fooling me Ivanna. I want answers and I want them now." Elena looked around, seeing their teacher occupied

admonishing another pair of students, not looking in their direction. "Answer me Ivanna." Elena spoke harshly at the girl she normally would regard to as friend, but at the moment she didn't trust Ivanna as long as she hid something from them.

Seeing Ivanna not giving any reply Elenas impatience came over her and she sent a rather forceful blasting spell at Ivanna, sending her flying a few meters before she hit the ground without getting back up. Elena hurried over to the fallen girl, looking at her with concern. She had not intended to hurt Ivanna but now it was to late and she seemed to have trouble getting back up. She tried to, but fell back down as she only tried to use one arm as her left shoulder seemed reluctant to support her weight. Elena softly pushed Ivanna back down, making her yelp in pain again as her shoulder touched the ground. Elena shoved the fabric of Ivannas clothing down from her neck to see the girls shoulder, gasping as she saw it all black and bruised. "Just some training accident? Hiding such a wound, what were you thinking?"

Before Ivanna could answer professor Kumiega had reached the scene looking at the two girls with worry. "Is everything alright with you two? I really should have put more emphasis on not hurting each other when I ordered you to duel..." The young professor was very concerned with the well being of each and every of her students, making her one of the most liked teachers here. By far the most liked compared to the slave drivers the students had to endure during their other lessons.

"Professor I believe Ivanna is hurt. Request permission to take her to the doctor." Elena did not even once look at her teacher, still looking at Ivanna with disbelieve, while Ivanna looked away from everyone, seemingly ashamed of her wound.

"Yes do so Elena. Come by later and inform me of the extent of her wounds if have to return to the class." With another concerned look the professor turned around and walked to the next pair of students. Meanwhile Elena pulled up Ivanna at her good shoulder and supported her as they walked out of the room to see the doctor. Benedikt meanwhile watched the scene from afar, not really sure what he should do. In the end he resigned to do nothing at the moment. It would be best for Ivanna to see a doctor, no matter what questions would arise later.

Alex had just finished recounting the way he had first met Elena, awaiting the headmasters reaction to the story. He had pondered whether or not to tell the man the truth, Kakaroff was not 100% trustworthy, but this story was not really a dangerous secret and it would get the man to trust him more. Kakaroff would believe Alex trusted him enough with his secrets and would possibly let some secrets of his own slip out to the young boy.

"A most interesting and beneficial retainer you got there my student. You were correct in not doubting her loyalty, there is hardly anyone more loyal then an oath bound Veela. And should she really be as strong as you claim I will permit her to join our lessons, but first she will have to proof her strength." Alex nodded at his teachers words. To have Elena receive the same kind of special training would be most beneficial and welcome for his plans.

"Another thing we have to discuss, how far has your training with your weaker arm progressed? Can you finally cast successfully with your left arm or do you need more training on this part? I am sure I do not need to impress the importance of such an advantage to you."

Alex simply smirked at Kakaroffs words, summoning his wand into his left hand, firing as stunner. Just this moment Victor walked into the room, barely able to dodge the incoming spell. "Bloody hell, Grindelwald. I will get you for this cowardly attack." Victor screamed angrily at his rival, taking out his wand, firing his own spells at Alex. Soon both students were busy fighting their usual duel, not one of them giving in to the other. Kakaroff simply watched the scene with amusement, seeing his two favorite students fight at such a high level at such a young age filled him with a sense of pride. And also he already planed how to exploit the possibilities of having a non human student among his private students.

In the infirmary the school doctor had just finished examining the extent of Ivannas wound, quite shocked at seeing such a severe wound this early into the new term.

"A broken shoulder and you just tried to act as if nothing has happened. Are you nuts Ivanna, this is a serious wound." Elena shook her head, wondering how anyone could be as stupid as to try hiding something like this instead of having it fixed up. "Now spill it Ivanna, who did this? I am quite sure it wasn't Benedikt, he is much

to soft when it comes to you. He would never use a spell that could damage you like this against you. And he would have instantly forced you to see a doctor had this happened during training with him."

Ivanna averted her eyes to the ground beside the bed she was currently lying on, unable to meet Elenas gaze. She said not a single word, unsure what to do now. Elena remained silent as the doctor returned and gave Ivanna a pain relieve potion before setting her shoulder right and mending the bones. Despite the potion the pain of such a procedure was still great and Ivanna winced quite a bit because of the pain. Ivanna would still have to remain in the infirmary for the rest of the day so she would do nothing to strenuous for the healed shoulder.

Once the doctor had left the two girls Elena spoke again. "Tell me Ivanna. Who did this? We can only help you when you cooperate with us, we are your friends. Don't you trust us?" Elena tried a less harsh approach, getting Ivanna to trust her enough to spill the secret. But Ivanna remained silent, still not looking at Elena.

"It was our father. He did this to set her right after she told him she was no longer willing to play his perfect little pure blood doll." Benedikt stood by the doorway, looking at his sister with worry.

"Your father did this? What the hell." Elena was filled with indignation at the thought of any parent doing such a thing to their child. Her own parents have never hit her and the only other parents she knew, Alex parents, were loving their child to much to intently hurt him in any way.

"Father was displeased with my demeanor, so he ... set me right. Every time I tried to train anything but being a pure blood lady he would punish me severely. I tried to bear with the punishment, to follow my own wishes but every day his punishment became harsher." Ivanna spoke in a small voice, afraid anyone else could hear her story and tell her father so he would come to punish her again.

"In the end he broke Ivannas shoulder and forbid us to call for any help, saying she would have to bear with it until it healed on its own so she would learn her place..." Benedikt clenched his fists as he spoke, his hate for his father pouring from every word.

"You are both stupid to try and keep this from us. We are your friends. Alex will help you Ivanna, he will find a way to keep your father from doing such things. He and his parents have very much influence, one way or another your father will be stopped." Elena spoke with much conviction as she made her way to leave the infirmary to find Alex.

"No wait. Please don't tell Alex. I will have to solve this myself. He will only see me as weak and as a burden again, I want to help and not be the one who has to be helped. Please Elena don't tell him." Elena saw Ivanna's pleading eyes. To have Alex see her as more than a weak girl meant a lot to Ivanna, that much was certain, but to keep things from Alex did not sit right with Elena.

"I will not tell him for now... but you either solve this before the start of next year, else I will tell him and we will find a solution for this problem. And Ivanna, never try to keep a secret from us again. We are your friends and you are as important to Alex as everyone else among our group. You are not alone, don't try to solve all by yourself. I let you off just this once." With these firm words Elena left the Kasakow twins alone. Both contemplating Elena's words. Ivanna unsure whether it was right to ask Elena to keep this a secret and Benedikt seeing his friends in a whole new way, seeing a chance to protect his sister even better with the help of others.

After dinner that day Alex approached Elena about the headmaster's proposal, most others already went to bed, so only the two remained in the sitting room on their floor. "Elena, tomorrow you will get a chance to join me and the little sissy Victor in our training with the headmaster."

Elena looked surprised at him, this was among the least things she would have expected to happen any time soon. "Are you sure? He was one of those most opposed to my very presence in this school. Just why should he change his mind now and allow me to become one of his private students?"

"Let's just say he got some good reasons to reevaluate his principles. He knows you are absolutely loyal to me so he has no problem in letting you join. Well as long as you pass his test. You will have to prove your strength to him in a duel. Either against me or Victor."

"Why not against the headmaster himself?" Elena was still a bit suspicious of this sudden chance given to her.

"Nah he fought me, but he would never fight a non human in such a match. The chances to embarrass himself are too high for him to take. Most likely he will have you fight Victor as you are involved with me and would hold back." Oh Alex couldn't wait to see Victor getting punched around by a girl, memories of a happy childhood.

"The question at hand is do you want me to join you in your training with the headmaster?" Elena looked at him questioningly.

"Elena I wouldn't have talked Kakaroff into letting you join if I was against the idea. You are strong and able enough to keep up with us and I want you to be prepared for every eventuality. You are in this entire mess because of me and I don't want to lose you." He looked at her with a sincerity that would always win her over, no matter what he asked of her.

"Fine, I will do my best not to embarrass you tomorrow." She hesitated for a moment, pondering whether or not to tell Alex about what had happened with Ivanna today. "Alex..." She started, ready to tell the Kasakows secret but changed her mind in the last second as he turned around and looked at her. "Thank you for believing in me... good night." She said softly before they both went to their rooms.

The next day came and went by, far too quick for most people's taste. As predicted Elena had to fight against Victor and though she lost her duel she gained at least some respect from headmaster Kakaroff and was permitted to join the private tutoring.

Also Ivanna returned to their group, being released from the infirmary with the order to return daily for the next week to watch the progress of her healing. Alex remained completely oblivious to the entire situation as neither the Kasakow twins nor Elena told him about it.

And so the life of the Durmstrang students returned to a almost comfortable routine. Due to their extensive training both Alex and Elena had little trouble in any of the tests. Much to Alex surprise the factions remained extremely quiet in the second term. The conservatives were almost nonexistent now as most of the 38

students that had left after Christmas were part of that faction and rather close followers of Pajaris ideas. But the rest also remained peaceful, their seventh year leaders just wanting to finish their year with their head on their shoulders so they kept their distance to Alex. But this also resulted that Alex plans to influence most of the higher years became much harder. He got almost all of the first and second years on his side now, with the exceptions like Victor, who still remained in his ever hostile attitude towards Alex and his friends, and Lilith, who except for some bantering never really made any move to socialize with other students. But the rest of the younger years just followed him without much worry. To be a follower of the famous Grindelwald heir was too tempting for most of the students and the Grindelwalds political power in Europe got many families to encourage their children to become friends with Alexander Grindelwald as it would be a guaranty to power in the long run. The parents influencing their children to join up with Alex became especially obvious after Conrad had become department head for the department of national security by unanimous vote of the German magical governing body.

It was mid June now, only two more weeks before the school year would come to an end as Alex found himself waiting in the headmasters office. By now he had been regular guest to the office so Kakaroffs secretary simply let him in without much waiting, a great honor in Kakaroffs book as all others who wanted to see him would have to wait at least an hour before the headmaster would find the time to attend to them, as long as their weren't someone important.

It didn't take long before Kakaroff entered the office from a side door, looking at his unexpected guest. "What can I do for you boy? Shouldn't you be training at the moment." He voice was somewhat gruff, 'must have woken him up from his nap' Alex thought by himself.

"I am here because there are some changes I would like to suggest for the coming school year headmaster." Alex looked at Kakaroffs surprised face, hard pressed not to laugh at the unusual expression of the headmaster.

"And what changes would that be. Do you really believe a first year knows that much about how to run a school?"

Alex simply ignored the last remark and went straight on. "As you know my friends and I had started a group that conducts physical training every morning. It has become quite popular among my fellow students so I wanted to suggest to make this an actual subject and hire a tutor for this. And maybe for physical combat too. You never know when the kids are gonna need it."

Kakaroff snorted at that. "But of course all of those students that would participate are members of your new faction, so in the long run you want to gain influence on all students, even those who keep away from your training."

"A valid point, but we both know the need for a unified school looking at the opposition we get from other schools like Hogwarts. Seeing this rivalry I would also suggest we should increase the number of students. Only 350 total is awfully few compared to big schools like that french kindergarten, you know which one I mean. I got some people definitely interested in sponsoring the endeavor of increasing the number of students here by funding a second dorm and more teachers." Alex smirked, he had Kakaroffs full attention at the moment.

"But this would also come at a price, am I correct? Nothing comes for free." Kakaroffs wasn't stupid, but Alex already suspected this reaction.

"Of course. Up until now the choice who gets an invitation to this noble school was in your hands, lets just say the group that would sponsor this wants the ability to make binding suggestions for new students here at Durmstrang."

"I really wonder who set you up to do this boy, but your proposal has some merit. I will consider it. But I want you to reveal the name of the one who gave you the order to talk about this."

"Somehow I feel hurt you give me so little credit here that you believe someone else would have to give me the ideas for such changes." Alex saw the headmasters glare before he seemingly conceded. "Very well, I shall reveal his name. My grandfather suggested such changes as he believes that there will be a conflict in the near future and we need as many people on our side and what better way to get people to follow you then to raise and educate them with your very own ideals. At least that is what my

grandfather said in our regular correspondence." Not essentially a lie, he had constant contact to his grandfather via mail but this idea did not come from him, Gellert Grindelwald merely commented on his heirs ideas and declared his support for them.

'Oh well and now to finally convince him' Alex chuckled at what he was about to do now, beat Kakaroff with his own narcissism. "And he also suggested a change of your title. A headmaster is nothing more then the leader of a mere school, you lead a great and noble institution like Durmstrang. Something like High Master would be much more fitting for a man such as yourself. Also this would give us a clear distinction from Dumbledore. It is repulsive to think of the two of you to be something like equals." Alex could see how Kakaroff pondered this suggestions. The whole High Master thing was a simply distraction so he would think less about the rest and agree more readily.

"I will have to think about these proposals. Rest assured I will keep your grandfathers involvement here a secret." Kakaroff had a gleeful shine in his eyes. 'Selfless my ass' Alex thought but he simply nodded at Kakaroff. "Also you should prepare yourself, I will have you and Victor do a demonstration of your skills to the entire school during the last week. The two of you will show the other students what true potential is." At this Alex could only grin with the headmaster. Kakaroff was just giving him another chance to impress the rest of the school. Adoration and fear will make them join him or at least make them think twice about crossing him.

The day of the headmasters demonstration came quickly, with only three days left to the school year all students were now free of the usual stress. All were eager to return home soon but todays event was certainly something most students had waited for. After Alex demonstration of his skills against Pajari some were already placing bets on how long Krum would survive, though it was no secret that both students were seen as equals by the headmaster.

"Just be careful with him, Victor will not play fair in this duel. His pride means everything to him, he will not let you beat him as long as he can prevent it." Elena was wary, she had seen Victors prowess in the dueling ring by herself. He was an opponent not to be taken lightly, but so was Alex. Still she couldn't shake this anxiety at what might happen to her friend.

"Don't worry Elena. I have beaten his sorry ass countless times before in training and I will do it again. You say he won't play fair, I say I hadn't planned to do so either." He flashed her a grin full of confidence in being able to beat Victor.

"Just be careful." With one last worried look Elena left Alex alone as he walked into the schools dueling ring with confident strides. Today it was even louder than the day he had beaten Pajari. Again every single student and all of the staff were present to see the headmaster's demonstration of true power, as Kakaroff had called it during his announcement.

Another round of cheers erupted as Victor Krum entered the ring from the other side, glaring at Alex all the time, most likely his attempt at unnerving his younger opponent. But Alex simply smiled at Victor, not showing any sign of worry or fear.

Kakaroff sat once more on his conjured throne like chair on the podium next to the ring, waiting for the students to calm down a bit. "Students and teachers of Durmstrang, today you will witness true power and ability. These fine young men have trained hard during this year and have by far surpassed the combat abilities of any other student here. Watch and learn from them when they show you what true potential means." With this he looked at his students down in the ring, seeing them both ready and waiting for the fight. "Normal rule boys, only magic is allowed, no other weapons except your wand and no lethal spells." He looked especially at Alex as he said that. He wanted them to go all out but he did not want them to kill each other. "Combatants... Begin."

Without hesitation both boys began their duel, circling each other like deadly predators waiting for an opening from their prey. It was Victor in the end who fired the first curse, a rather weak stunner to test his opponent's reactions. Alex simply raised a shield blocking the weak spell without much effort before he retaliated with a cutting curse against Victor's legs. Victor jumped to the side to avoid the curse as he saw Alex send another curse in the general direction where he had escaped to. Rolling down on the floor he quickly jumped up and sent a barrage of different blasting spells against Alex but most were absorbed by his shield while the strongest were avoided with a simple sidestep.

Kakaroff watched the scene with mild amusement. He hadn't expected Victor to be the one on the defense but he knew that this could easily change. The boys' reflexes were superior to Alex since his Quidditch training required him to be fast and agile as a seeker.

Victor watched his opponent closely, waiting for his chance. As Alex evaded another strong cutting curse Victor saw his chance, conjuring a fireball, sending it at Alex who could just barely evade the flaming sphere. Now Victor was on the move, sending his spells in rapid succession at Alex, giving him not a single moment of rest.

Elena watched the battle from the sidelines with worry. As the third private student of the headmaster she had to stay with him during the fight, but his obvious joy at seeing his students at each other's throat was almost sickening to Elena. Seeing Alex on the defense made just standing there a hard task, she wanted to step in and help him but knew in this duel he was all on his own. She looked around and saw the rest of Alex's followers cheering loudly for their leader. Especially Benedikt who yelled some not so friendly things about Krum and his behavior towards... well Elena didn't even want to think about such things. Her worry about her friend was all on her mind right now.

Alex was just dodging at the moment. Victor's relentless assault left almost no openings for a counter attack. He waited for a chance. After some time Victor's spells became weaker, the constant strength needed for the barrage had taken its toll on the student. Alex used this chance and conjured a shield before he abandoned his cover to retaliate against his opponent. But Alex was mistaken as he believed Victor to be exhausted already, strong curses bounced against his shield, making him stumble and sending his spells astray. Alex's last blasting curse impacted in front of Victor, making the dirt fly around temporarily blinding the older boy. But despite their positions both boys did not stop casting, sending even stronger spells at each other until two blasting curses hit both fighters. The sickening crunch of breaking bones could be heard from both boys as the spells connected, Victor was hit in the chest, his ribcage looking like a dragon had kicked it, making Victor cough blood. But none the less Victor still stood, unwilling to let this stop him. Alex was on the ground, the spell had connected with his right shoulder, shattering it in the process and sending him down on his back, his wand lying a bit to his side. Victor saw this weakness and came closer slowly, his wand always trained on Alex's chest.

"Give up Grindelwald, your beaten." Speaking was hard for Victor but he forced his demand out, seeing victory finally in his grasp. But Alex merely chuckled.

"Dream on fly boy." With his left hand Alex summoned his wand and directed it at his opponent. Too shocked to react to Alex's sudden use of his weaker arm, Victor simply stood there. Before he could realize what had happened, Alex had his wand drawn on him and used a strong stunner on the older boy, knocking him out before Alex lost consciousness due to the extreme pain in his shoulder.

All the spectators were at loss for words. Silence reigned for some minutes before the first realized that the duel was over. When the headmaster pronounced Alex the winner of the duel, it finally snapped the students out of their shock and many cheered for the young Grindelwald.

Alex woke up about an hour later in the infirmary to the muttering of the doctor about stupid students getting beaten up all the time and some rather unintelligible things about having to treat another broken shoulder again. His friend around Alex looked rather unsure at that very moment but Alex simply thought of it as a sign of their worry about his situation. In a bed a bit down the room, Victor was still sleeping to recover from his wounds. They had nearly killed each other in this duel, but to Alex, this was his least worry. "God, my mother is so gonna throw a fit about this." He groaned as his friends around him had to laugh about Alex's only worry at the moment.

The final feast of the school year had come. By now both Victor and Alexander were released from the infirmary to join their fellow students during the last festivity of the school year. Despite their harsh fight and their heavy wounds they both had sustained, Alex and Victor were still glaring daggers at each other, neither willing to back down. But in the end, both were separated by their friends and some teachers so there would be no second round to their duel, at least not yet as far as Kakaroff was concerned.

"Sons and daughters of Durmstrang, another school year has come to an end. You all have learned and witnessed much this year. Never forget any of it. This year you have seen falsehood and its consequences, you have seen death and cowardice. And you have seen strength and determination. Take these things to heart and do

your families proud by improving yourself beyond your current boundaries in the next year." Kakaroff looked around, looking almost every student in the face before he continued. "Also the next year will be one to look forward to, we will see an increase of students here as we have decided to expand the school to accommodate another 150 students. Also we will see new teachers and subjects to challenge all of your skills, magically, physically and mentally to prepare you for the hardships outside of your later lives. Go now, enjoy your holidays and prepare yourself for the trials that will await you here once you return."

He looked around one more time until his gaze fell upon the small group of seventh years that would leave the school this year. "And for those of you who will not return always remember this, you have been taught well and you are expected to do your very best. Do not bring shame upon this school by screwing up your lives."

Alex looked happily at the moment, in the end Kakaroff had given in to his ideas on how to reform the school. The first step in making this place the academy to train his future followers had been made. Now all that would remain is to get the rest of the students that are here right now to follow his lead. But they would follow him sooner or later. It was inevitable, he would rule this school and use its resources and students to complete his dream. But now he would have to get advice from his grandfather, the old Grindelwald once had many followers, some fiercely loyal to the day. Surely the great Gellert Grindelwald would know how to win the peoples hearts and minds so they would follow your lead. Yes the first year was successful for him, he and his loyal friends would not stop in their second year, no they would even progress further with their plans, though except for Elena none of Alex other friends knew of his plans, sometime in the future he would have to change that but at the moment they are loyal without the need to trouble their minds with the schemes and plans for the future.

So first year is over and ended with a great demonstration of power. I personally like the idea of having Alex and Victor as rivals though this will inevitably change later in the story. Also Victors career as a Quidditch player will gain more importance to him later on, right now he is just 12, to young to play as a pro but hey that will change when he gets older.

I do hope I described a believable year at a school such as Durmstrang. I see this school as a much harsher and violent place then Hogwarts. A place where power and influence mean everything and the fights are among the students. Here they fight for power whereas in Hogwarts all problems and fights were centered around the Black and White stereotype as well as the Dark Lord.

This chapter was also much longer then most others, simply because there were still so many things left for the first year that I wanted in. The chapters from now on will all be longer, simply because from now on the next few school years will be describe in 1-2 chapters up until Alex sixth year.

Okay thats all for today. Please leave a Review, I really like the responses to the story so far and will try to make this all entertaining for all of my readers.

Chapter 11: Black Wolf

If there was one thing that Gellert Grindelwald disliked then it was lateness. And currently he was waiting for his heir, looking out of the window of his room as he awaited the knock on his door. Long had he waited for his heir to return to him and now the time it took Alexander to climb the tower was testing the old wizard's patience.

A knock on the door signaled the arrival of the young Grindelwald heir. "Come in." The voice of the old wizard was commanding, not really hiding his bad mood. Before Alexander could say a word the old Grindelwald continued. "I expected you a week ago, Alexander. What excuse do you have for making me wait? I was waiting for your report of the proceedings at Durmstrang." Anger laced deeply in every word.

"Forgive me grandfather, but I was unable to leave my home for the past week. Due to me getting hurt extensively at the end of the school year my mother saw it fit to ground me for a week as punishment for my ... frivolity." Alexander did not look at his grandfather as he told him his excuse for arriving late, his eyes ever averted towards the ground as a sign of submission to the older man to placate him. But it would have made no difference to look directly at him as the old man not even once turned around to look at his heir, instead he seemed focus on something far away outside his window.

"That weak willed woman, once again she interferes." The man spat, much to the dislike of his grandson.

"Why is it that you seem to dislike my mother so much, grandfather?" Alex had his eyes narrowed as he looked at the back of his grandfather.

"She is worthless, I tell you. Raised in that mindless school for the politically inept in France, she does know nothing about the world we live and work in boy. She tries to live her so called morals, never trying to adept to our way of living. The strong will always rule the weak, something your so called mother will never understand." With this he turned around to look at his heir, seeing the anger in his eyes.

"And yet you still have a daughter, that must mean at least something to you." Alex knew it was unwise to anger the old man,

but he needed to know the truth why his mother and her father didn't get along.

"She was a mistake, one I didn't even know about until your father informed me of their surprise meeting. She is weak, so weak she doesn't even have the courage to face me herself. Only once in her life has she dared to come before me. She isn't worth the Grindelwald name, the only thing she was good for was to give me a real heir and even at that she ... almost failed." In the last moment the old wizard realized what he nearly let slip out, but corrected himself, but not without his grandsons notice. "Enough of this, I don't have time to discuss matters that are already resolved and unchangeable. Report your progress."

Despite his anger at his grandfather at the moment Alex knew it would be unwise to antagonize him any further, so he did a short report on all that had transpired since the last letter he had sent to his grandfather. The old man seemed pleased with his grandsons progress so far.

"Very good. You have showed them not to mess with you. But you still have powerful opponents before you. That Krum boy, he could be valuable asset to our cause, could he be turned to our side." The earlier anger had vanished from the old wizards face, replaced now with a calculating gaze.

"That could prove to be hard as Victor and I have a strong rivalry of sorts. Getting him to work for us could be a waste of time as he most likely would never see himself as lower than me to follow my orders." Alex had a rueful smile on his face as he thought about the way he and Victor acted towards each other, not really hate but a strong enough rivalry to rule out any chances for a friendship at the moment.

"Stupid child, anyone can be turned. Find his weakness and use it against him. Acquire something he wants and get him to join you in exchange for it. Once he has sworn the oath he will serve you like all the others. It is also time to change your strategy. You rely too much on your name and families reputation to recruit followers. You need more than that." This got Alex full attention. "What you need is a symbol the people will always attribute to you and an agenda that people can sympathize with. You need to create your own agenda as it will be the first thing people will think about when they will hear

your name. Then you need to spread it around the people, don't preach it out like a mad heretic, let people see how you live and believe in your agenda and they will follow you because of it."

Alex just nodded at his grandfathers words, he knew they were true and valuable but he found it hard for an eleven, almost twelve year old to already find an agenda to follow for all his life. The meeting with his grandfather soon ended and Alex left the tower the way he had arrived, via portkey outside the towers wards as only his father possessed one that could go through the wards.

Weeks passed by, filled with training and Alex searching through tons of books to find a agenda fitting his plans. He spent his time reading up on the reasons, justifications and whatnot of political figures past and present, magical and muggle but he found nothing fitting. Only the same stupid bigotry and racism in both worlds again and again. At least he had an easy time finding a symbol for people to recognize him by. From his fathers side of the family he adopted the 'Black Wolf', the head of a howling wolf in a black circle, a symbol his fathers ancestors used whenever they went to war in the service of their liege lord. Alex practically took over another family tradition, something that filled him with pride. Placed on a crimson background, the color that had been attributed to him ever since he started school because of the blood jewel on his bracer, the entire symbol exuded something majestic, at least to Alex.

He planned to show his new personal symbol for the first time during his twelfth birthday party, which much to his dismay would become just another political gathering like his eleventh. At least he hoped this year Dumbledore and his vigilante group would mind their own business. And this year his friends and supporters from Durmstrang would attend as well. 'At least more people my age group than just me and Elena this year', Alex thought, trying to find at least some positive aspects about the coming party. Not that he minded Elenas presence, but her overly quiet and submissive behavior in front of his parents were unnerving once he had seen how different she acted in Durmstrang. Another topic he knew he would have to address sooner or later.

And his birthday came as expected. Shaking hands with too many politicians and other influential guests, just as he had expected. It seemed every opportunistic family in half of Europe had sent at least someone that day, why they were so obsessed with getting into the

good graces of the Grindelwald family was still a mystery to Alex. He knew his families influence in some countries was great, the Grindelwald name was a valuable asset in any endeavor in those nations, but still having them come here to suck up to a twelve year old was beyond Alex comprehension.

At least he had most of his friends with him he thought, though he was wondering about the absence of Ivanna, though her brother was present. As he asked Benedikt about it the boy only shrugged, saying she fell ill a few days before. To Alex astonishment he saw Elena glare at Benedikt while he said that and Benedikt oddly seemed to evade Elena for the rest of the day. Another thing to add to Alex to do list he thought with a sigh, but at least he could do this a few days later when Benedikt had promised to come over for training during the holidays.

The party was odd for Alex, especially after meeting the German minister again and being asked to attend to Lilith while the adults talk about politics. Somehow Alex couldn't shake the feelings his parents tried to push him towards the girl, though Lilith repeatedly emphasized her point that she would rather not spend too much time with him. Thankfully though Alex birthday party came to an end, not soon enough from Alex point of view, but at least now he would have his peace again until the start of his second year at Durmstrang. Yes school life would be troublesome once more, how little he knew what Kakaroff had already planned for his students this year.

A few days later Benedikt came over, though had he known what would await him he would have stayed home most likely. The moment he had entered the training room, Benedikt was under the close scrutiny of the only other two present persons.

"Benedikt, pray tell me why did you come here alone? Where is your sister? She already missed out on the party a few days ago." Alex gaze never left Benedikts face as he saw the boy evading his eyes.

"Ah Alex, Ivanna is still... ill. It will take some time for her to recover, but I am quite positive that she will be back to her old self once the next year at school starts." Benedikts words were slurry and hard to understand but Alex glare at his friend only intensified, everyone could see through the lies.

"Stop the charade Benedikt. I told Alex about what had happened during last years winter holidays. Stop the act and tell us what has happened to Ivanna." Elenas voice was cold and commanding, but her eyes betrayed her as they showed real concern about what had happened to her friend.

"So Benedikt will you just stand there and spout more lies or will you act like the friend I have come to appreciate. You know that as long as it is within my powers I will help, so why do you keep such things from me. Where is Ivanna, what has your father done this time?" There was no more harshness in his words, disappointment and worry were prevalent now.

Benedikt looked at his friends before let out a sigh of defeat and slumped on the ground. "Ivanna is in hospital, Alex. She tried what she promised Elena. She really tried to solve her problem with our father by herself. She stood up to him, she opposed him when he tried to force her back into the role of his perfect little pure blood doll he could sell to the highest bidder. When she refused to play along he got angry. She never stood a chance against our father, he nearly cursed her into oblivion. She will recover but he mad it clear that he will repeat it as often as necessary for her to see reason." As he finished Benedikt averted his eyes to the ground.

"And where were you? Did you help her or did you enjoy the show Benedikt?" Alex spat at the other boy, disappointed at his actions.

"I..I.. he is my father...I simply cannot..." Benedikt stuttered before he stopped.

"You what? You always brag about your fighting skills, about how you want to find challenges. There was your challenge and you failed. You could have helped, protected your sister and what did you do? Sit by and watch. Tell me Benedikt, did she beg you for help? Did she look at you with pleading eyes as your father tortured her for being herself? You make me sick Benedikt." At Alex words Benedikt fell to his knees, his hands covering his face as if he tried to hide the shame.

Benedikt first began to speak again as he saw Alex and Elena leave the room. "Where are you going?" Was all he could say with a wavering voice.

"To your uncle. Fedor never liked his brother, always rambling about the pompous arse and such things. This should be a good enough reason for him to beat the living shit out of his brother." With this he left the room to get into contact with Fedor Kasakow.

Though Alex didn't really like Fedor, because of his blatant hate of Elena for being a Veela, Alex knew that the man would act against his brother. And just as expected only a day later Nestor Kasakow announced that he would move to Sevastopol, for business reasons of course, and that his family would remain alone in their manor near Moskau. A day later Alex and Elena visited Ivanna in hospital, assuring the girl that she did the right thing when she stood up against her father, telling her they are proud of her, despite Alex addressing his disappointment at not being told about her problems before things needlessly escalated. Benedikt vowed that day that he would not let any harm befall his sister ever again, much to her annoyance and judging by the fervor during his training he intended to follow through with his vow.

In Britain, Albus Dumbledore was currently invited to dinner with one of his most loyal families of the light side, the Potters. And as expected he brought news and plans with him to discuss with the adults, concerning Rose and the future of the entire wizarding world.

"James my boy, as much as I enjoy being part of such merry occasions I must admit I have also come with a request towards you and your family. As you all know it has been my aspiration to ensure that the Grindelwald boy will not fall to the dark side. I know I had little success so far but at least we can still say that there is hope for the boy." James Potter listened intently to his mentors words while his wife was bringing their daughter to bed.

"This winter we will get another unique chance to have a good influence on the boy, a chance we cannot let pass. Kakaroff has entered eight of his students into the dueling competition that will be held in London this December. Grindelwald is one of these students. There will be only Kakaroff and these eight children, a perfect chance to talk to the boy and convince him of our ideals without his family interfering." The twinkle in the old wizards eye seemed to have grown twice its size as he saw realization dawn upon James Potters face.

"And you want me to talk to him? He will most likely know about my affiliation with you so I doubt that he will be willing to talk to me that much professor." James looked unconvinced at his mentors plan.

"Maybe but I want not just you but your entire family to be there. Maybe if young Rose could befriend him and you give him the chance to see what a real family is like he will see reason. I am sure he only knows the harsh life his family has exposed him to, to mold him to be the perfect heir to his dark grandfather."

"You want Rose to befriend a possible dark wizard? What if this entire thing goes wrong and it is him corrupting my daughter? I have already lost one child to dark wizards, I will not sacrifice my daughter because you believe there might be a chance to convince him of your ideals." James was angry, of all the people he would have never expected Dumbledore to take any risks when it came to Roses safety.

"Calm down my boy. Rose will be perfectly safe. I will be there as well since students from Hogwarts will be attending the competition. Rose will be in no danger at any time." James was fighting a losing battle and he knew it. Dumbledore was convinced of his own idea and would not budge. All he could do now was hope for the best and watch out for his daughter.

The rest of the holidays passed by in a rush and soon Alex and his friends found themselves back in the familiar halls of Durmstrang, sitting together for the start of term feast. But this year was quite different, with a complete new dorm and the capacity for another 150 students there were many more first years than usual. The entire hall seemed enlarged to fit the newcomers. Though not all possible new places had been taken by students this year, the number of first years had doubled to almost 70, something that pleased Alex to no end. It was his influence on Kakaroff that made this possible and it gave him the chance to gain many more followers, as the younger years would be far more impressionable than the higher ups.

The headmaster or high master as he wanted to be addressed as now, speech was as boring as the year before. There was only one thing of interest for Alex and his friends among the entire monologue.

"And also this year our school will take part at a friendly dueling competition in London. Eight of our best students in the age group 12-15 will represent our school. The competitors will be chosen by a little inner school tournament all of you will take part in. As it is three participants have already been chosen, them being Alexander Grindelwald, Victor Krum and Elena Dupont as these three have already proven to be among the best of the school." Without many more words Kakaroff dismissed the students afterward.

School resumed the way it had ended. Dreadfully long lessons in more subjects then most students would ever need in their life and for Alex and Elena there were also the special lessons with Kakaroff on top of that. The high master made it his personal duty to prepare his three private students to win the competition and that meant extra long lessons with a sheer endless amount of new spells and tactics to be learned before December. Kakaroff also organized new school uniforms for his special group of students, now also including the five students that won the inner school tournament, although these students were deprived of the high masters special tutoring.

So the day of their departure came with the first December 1990. Packed for a whole month in London the contestants from Durmstrang were awaiting their high masters arrival so they could leave via portkey and head to their hotel. They all stood there in their new uniforms. To the usual attire of the Durmstrang students now came knee high boots made of dragon hide and a breast piece, also made of dragon hide, with the engraved crest of Durmstrang on the left side, above the heart. Both boots and breast piece were made to impress and also had other golden patterns engraved onto them. Each of the students wore a long cloak, most with the crest of their families stitched onto them. Every student had another cloak, all except Elena who wore the same cloak as Alex as a sign of her affiliation to the Grindelwald family. Both wore the black wolf with pride as it would become a symbol for ever attributed to the Grindelwald name.

When Alex looked around into the faces of his fellow competitors he saw many of them smirk. Two of the five others were already followers of him, the other two were third and fourth years Alex had little contact to so far, but now he had a month to change that. The fifth was a surprise to Alex, although he was unsure whether it was a good or a bad surprise.

"Why do I get this feeling that you try to stalk me dear Lilith?" Alex said with a smirk as he saw the young girl scowl.

"Stop daydreaming. I won my place here fair and square. Did you honestly think the daughter of a minister would not be trained to defend herself?" Lilith looked annoyed at Alex, something that seemed to amuse him even more.

"Still this is just another coincidence. It should please our families to no end to hear that we will spend an entire month together, far away from school and the dreadful lessons." He trailed off after that seeing her glare at him.

"Believe it or not I am not in the slightest interested in spending more time with you than necessary, Grindelwald. Our families may wish it to be different but I have no such desire." Before Lilith could continue the high master arrived, looking one last time at the group of Durmstrang champions, as he called the eight students, before he pulled a portkey from his bag that would take them to London.

Two days were given to the students before the competition would start, enough time to get used to the change of scenery. While a few of the Durmstrang students also used the chance to visit Diagon Alley to go shopping, Alex, Elena and Victor remained in the hotel, the latter still disgruntled for having to share a room with Alex.

"Come on Victor, if you scowl any more you will start looking like a bulldog." Alex tried it with humor for once. He wasn't really in the mood to indulge their rivalry any more with any rude comments.

"Easy for you to say. Being stuck here, inside the city. It bores the hell out of me. I cannot even fly here, no place to do it without being seen by the muggles." Victor walked over to the window, looking down on the busy London streets.

"Ah yes, Quidditch. You are quite fond of that sport if I remember correctly."

"One more year and I am old enough to start going pro. Fourteen is the minimum age in my country to play for any team. I enjoy the dueling but it is not where I want to be." Victor sat down on his bed shaking his head.

"School and playing for a team? Paired with Igors torture lessons this can get quite stressful. But I will be looking forward to seeing you play Quidditch Victor, I'm not much of a fan of the sport but at least you bring glory to our school when you become famous." Alex only got a snort as response, but he knew this was the first real conversation he had with Victor since they knew each other. But he was also aware once the competition started their rivalry would be back with full force. Some things would probably never change.

For the first time Alex and his friends saw their competition, the total number of participants would be 64 this year, students from many schools, not just Hogwarts and Durmstrang but also Beauxbatons and many smaller schools had sent someone to represent them. But to Alex most of them looked like innocent little children that were not ready to face a real fight.

Much to his annoyance the whole competition started with a checkup of the wands the students would use, just to make sure everything was in working condition as the organizers assured them. Kakaroff though muttered under his breath that they were just spying out the rivals for their own participants. And much to Alex annoyance one of the two persons sitting at the table where they would check the wands was no other than Albus Dumbledore, looking at Alex with his usual twinkle and his grandfatherly smile, Alex found it to be sickening to watch the old mans charade.

It was now nearly Alex turn at the table, only Elena left before him, and Alex couldn't wait to get over with it. They had already wasted half of the first day with this. As Elena walked over to the table Alex watched her intently, hoping the old man wouldn't try anything funny on her.

"Ah so our next competitor. Elena Dupont, twelve years old, Durmstrang second year. Is this information correct?" Elena only nodded at Dumbledore, not really interested in any conversation with the professor. The other man, formerly introduced as Ollivander to all people, took Elenas wand, holding it almost reverently as he got a better look at it.

"That is a fine wand young lady, elven inches, elm. Ah the core is a Veela hair combined with Veela blood, curious indeed, very temperamental. Might I inquire who gifted the core to your wand?"

Elena was suspicious of the man, but he only seemed interested in the wand, not really in her.

Elena took her wand back and sheathed it in her holster before she answered the man. "The hair and blood are my own, the wand was crafted specially for me and no one else can wield it." Without waiting for a reply the girl left the two men at the table, both shocked about hearing that a Veela was a student at Durmstrang. Dumbledore though was even more surprised as he saw the crest on her cloak, as it was the same as the young Grindelwalds.

Without giving them any chance to recover from the shock Alex walked towards them, never letting Dumbledore out of his sight. "Ah Mr Grindelwald, finally. I am quite curious about what wand someone of your bloodline would use."

Alex handed his wand to Ollivander, the old man looking at the wand oddly until realization dawned on his face. "This is remarkable, a true masterpiece. Twelve inches, but I cannot see which wood was used for this wand."

"There is no wood used for this wand. It was carved out of a dragonbone, a remain of one of the ancient dragons. The core itself is a preserved heartstring of one such dragon." Alex stated with a hint of pride.

"Truly remarkable. This sign, yes I had already expected this to be the work of Gregorowitsch. Only he would attempt to mold such precious materials these days." Reluctantly Ollivander wanted to return the wand, only to find himself stopped by Dumbledore.

"I am sorry Mr Grindelwald, but these materials are not legal, you will have to surrender this wand and get yourself a new one, I am sure Mr Ollivander can assist you with this." Before Dumbledore could reach the wand another man had come to the group.

"What is this Dumbledore, trying to increase the chances of your students with this pathetic display of bias. You see a wand more powerful than any of your students have and try to steal it?" Kakaroff sneered at the Headmaster, anger blazing in his eyes.

"The high master is correct Mr Dumbledore. The materials are not listed, as they are not commonly used. But they are not illegal. Cease your attempt at stealing my wand, I will not let you have it after you have already stolen the wand my grandfather used. And don't give me your lecture about dark and evil wands, made of dark and evil materials. It is pathetic." Alex glared at the headmaster until he relented.

"Very well Mr Grindelwald. But be warned I will not tolerate any dark spells being used in this tournament." With a voice of authority Dumbledore spoke loud enough for all people to hear.

"By your limited point of view that would mean we are only allowed two hit each other with pillows, as you see every spell used in combat as dark. But wouldn't that make you dark as well? After all you know a lot of spells solely used in combat." Without waiting for a reply Alex took his wand and left together with his now smirking high master.

Alex first opponent was a Hogwarts student, Alex didn't really care about his name, something with Davis. The boys skills were abysmal compared to the standard education students would have received in Durmstrang by his age. Alex did not even take off his cloak before he simply blasted the boy out of the ring. As Alex walked down to his chair he saw that some people, a black haired man and woman and a girl with equally red hair, were now sitting next to his place. Oh how he hated the Brits for placing participants among the audience. At least he had Elena on his other side to talk to.

"Hello young man, quite impressive skills you have shown there." The black haired man tried to strike a conversation with Alex, but only got a curt thank you as return, nothing else. "Ah my name is James Potter, these are my wife Lily and our daughter Rose." He gestured towards the two red heads.

Potter, so that's what is going on. Dumbledores lackeys. "Nice meeting you Mr Potter, but I would really like to concentrate on Victors duel, from all people here he will be my biggest competition."

Looking a bit taken aback James still tried to get the boy to talk to him. "So you think both of you might make it to the finals? There a

great number of other students here, surely there will be more people that would pose a competition."

To James surprise it was not Alex who answered, but Elena after a snort. "You must understand Mr Potter that Alex and Victor are the best when it comes to dueling. No one in our school stands a chance against one of them, not even I and I train with them every day."

"And you are Ms.?" James looked at the blond girl with curiosity.

"Elena Dupont, my oldest and dearest friend Mr Potter. And don't listen to her words, if there is anyone who could come close to me and Victor it is her, she just avoids attention and lets us win most of the times." Alex spoke with a little laugh, missing the strange look on Elenas face as he introduced her as his closest friend. So far she had seen herself as a servant, an asset maybe, but never truly as a friend.

Victors duel ended as quickly as Alex had, he defeated the student of a small Austrian school without much of challenge before he went down to sit a few seats away from Alex. Alex really wondered why Dumbledore hadn't tried anything else so far until he saw him and Kakaroff having a heated argument a bit removed from the audience.

Seeing his approaches so far being less then fruitful James tried to strike a different topic with the young Grindelwald. "Are you by any chance playing Quidditch Mr Grindelwald? It is a great sport isn't it. Played it myself during my school days at Hogwarts."

Alex looked at the Potter with an raised eyebrow. "I have never been a fan of Quidditch or flying on a broom in general. The only one who really uses the Pitch at our school is 'tall and broody' over there, he is your man when you want to talk about Quidditch, goes pro next year additional to school." As pointed over to Victor who looked at him angrily.

"Ah yes Durmstrang. A harsh school I have heard. Never been there though. My little Rose here will start Hogwarts next year. Come Rose why don't you say something." James placed a hand on his daughters shoulder looking at her encouragingly to talk to the older boy. But alas she didn't speak a word, she looked rather shy and timid towards Alex and his friends.

"It is a good thing you send your daughter to Hogwarts Mr Potter." At this James looked questioningly at Alex. "Your daughter wouldn't survive a week at Durmstrang. She is too shy, too fearful. I guess you have raised her away from society after her brothers... unfortunate fate. Letting someone grow up too sheltered might ruin them just as much as exposing them to the harsh reality." With this Alex stood up and walked up to the ring for his next fight.

To his surprise he was now up against Lilith, said girl looking rather unwell at the thought of having to face one of Kakaroff's private students. "My, my. Dear Lilith so we meet again, in the ring this time. You said you earned your place here, so why don't you prove it to me."

Without giving Alex a reply Lilith switched to a battle stance as they started circling each other. Alex's eyes never left hers, daring her to make the first move. And soon it came. A short chain of spells, weak stunners mixed with some strong cutting curses, surprising Alex as they met his shield. She really tried her best against him but both knew that her training was far from the point Kakaroff had driven his private students to. Lilith was concentrating completely on her opponent, not giving any second glance to her surrounding, something Alex saw as her greatest weakness. With a wave of his wand he shot a water spell at her, but not her head or torso but against her legs and the ground she stood on, before he used another spell to freeze the water making her slip. Before Lilith could comprehend what happened she was about to fall on her back only to be stopped by Alex's arm, as he held her around her waist with one arm, while he pointed his wand at her throat with the other, deciding the match for him.

"It was a wonderful fight Lilith, I enjoyed myself greatly. You are good I have to give you that but your weaknesses are too obvious. You are not cut out to fight, from what I know you are far better with words than with a wand. Maybe you should rethink your plans for the future." Alex smiled at her while he saw her blushing at the close embrace Alex still held her in. It took her a few moments to compose herself before she broke free from him to leave the ring, her usual indifferent mask visibly shaken.

The entire competition moved on without many surprises. For the first two weeks the number of participants was reduced from sixty-

four down to eight and without many surprises four of the eight were Durmstrang students, the others were from minor schools in eastern Europe, where the curriculum was similar to Durmstrang. To Dumbledores disappointment all of his students were beaten rather thoroughly by the other competitors. Most of the days Alex also continued his talks with James Potter, he somehow liked the man but would never trust him as he knew that Potter was a close ally of Dumbledore.

Many people were in awe at seeing how Kakaroffs elite students, as some people now called them, nearly destroyed their entire opposition. Alex, Victor and Elena were the most likely candidates for winning the competition. So far none of the three had to face the other but with the round of the last eight now they were bound to clash soon, something the increasing number of viewers awaited almost impatiently. Elena also became the center of much unwanted attention of Dumbledore and some others, as they marveled how a Veela got to become a student at Durmstrang in a time where only pure blood children were accepted there.

In the semi-final now Alex had to face Elena, a fight both knew that would be hard, for many different reasons. As both walked up to the ring, their equal crimson cloaks billowing behind them, the audience cheered, looking forward to a great fight between two of the strongest students in this entire competition.

"Ready Elena? This will be one hard fight, show me what you got my friend." Alex smiled at her, seeing the uncertainty in her eyes.

"Are you sure Alex, I could simply concede to you, I do not wish to fight you or anything of the sort." Elena looked around seeing the nearly sold out stadium filled to the last place.

"No Elena. You will fight and show me how strong you are. If you are strong enough to beat me I will be proud of you, if not it won't matter as I will never see you as weak. But giving up now is something I could never forgive you. Fight me Elena and do it with all your strength and conviction." At Alex words Elena looked more certain of herself and got into her battle stance, now both of the waiting for the fight to begin.

From the very beginning both Alex and Elena started without holding back against the other, wide variances of curses flew around the

ring, being blocked or evaded. Their fight entranced the audience as it seemed to be a dance, a lethal dance for anyone with lesser knowledge on how to defend themselves, but breathtaking none the less. They conjured walls from the ground to block spells, ripping down the barriers created by the other just to find them waiting with whole new barrage of spells behind it. Alex even forced Elena to use her Veela magic to throw fireballs at him, the now undeniable truth to all who had doubted her claim to be a Veela. For almost an hour the fight continued without a clear superior in the fight. By now both Alex and Elena were panting heavily from the exhaustion. In the end both knew it would be the stamina that would decide their fight and with Alex training since his early childhood both knew he would be superior on that front. But Elena would not give up easily still used all her remaining power to a few strong blasting spells. Alex had to evade them, no longer had he the strength left to form a strong enough shield. After he got back to his feet he saw Elena finally collapse from the exhaustion, he had won a fight that many would remember. The stadium erupted into cheers as the winner of the fight was finally announced, the mood in the stadium at its height as if Alex had already won the entire competition. But he knew there was still one obstacle. Victor. Before any of the medics could enter the ring Alex had already picked up the still unconscious Elena and carried her out of the ring towards the place the medics had placed a bed for wounded participants.

"An overwhelming fight. It is almost scary how strong these Durmstrang students already are, don't you agree professor?" James Potter looked at his mentor, seeing the old man looking worriedly, while a few feet away Igor Kakaroff made his way to his students congratulating them on their impressive fight, looking as if Christmas had come early for him.

"Impressive indeed, but it also worries me to know that two students so young already know so much about fighting. Durmstrang is indeed a violent school. I also wonder why that Veela girl is there and why she seems to be so loyal to Grindelwald. This competition roused more questions then I wanted. Grindelwald seems to be a much greater threat then I had anticipated. Someone with his skills must under no circumstances go dark. His skills would be to valuable once Voldemort returns."Dumbledore looked pensive, the urgency to gain Alex trust had increased much and he still had no clue as to how to gain the boy for his side.

"Young Alexander called that girl Elena one of his oldest and dearest friends during one of our conversations. They also seem to be rather close. But to have a Veela at Durmstrang can also be seen as a good sign, maybe they rethink their values and stop their racism against other races and people of mixed blood." Dumbledore absentmindedly nodded to James words, but still this would not do, the boy must be under control at a light school like Hogwarts.

Alex had two days to recover from his fight against Elena, as the other finalist had yet to be determined. But Alex was quite sure he knew who it would be. Without a doubt Victor would crush the other students in his way. Their rivalry would find another climax.

It was the 28th December now, almost a month they had now spent in London as Alex and the other Durmstrang students got a great surprise for them. Their parents came to visit, as they all had already missed a week of holidays. They would stay to watch the final fight, the now determined confrontation of Victor Krum and Alexander Grindelwald, and after that the parents would take their children home for the remainder of the holidays. The Grindelwald family roused the greatest interest among the people present, not just alone because of their name or the fact that their son was a finalist, but also because of the company they arrived with. Though it didn't really surprise Alex to see his father with the minister once more, the two of them had become rather inseparable after Alex father had taken up his position at the ministry. The presence of a minister from another country also got the attention of the british minister, one Cornelius Fudge and soon the two ministers and Alex father were in a deep discussion about current European politics.

Alex mother though never left his side, worried about her sons well being, the consequences of Alex last duel with Victor still fresh in her mind. "So what have you been doing in your free time Alex? I hope you did more then just fight and train, you know this was a chance to get to know a different culture."

"We spend most time here mom. The high master wanted us to see every fight so we would know our later opponents better. But I must say I had some rather pleasant conversations with some people here." For a moment Alex considered whether or not to tell his mother about Potters attempts to talk to him, but in the end he knew he would always have a hard time hiding things from her. "One of

them was James Potter, a rather decent man as long as you don't think about his affiliation with Dumbledore."

At hearing the name Potter Selene looked around worriedly. Soon she caught sight of the black haired man standing next to Dumbledore, both looking in her direction. "And what did you talk to him about Alex?" Selene asked, barely able to hide a wavering in her voice.

"He desperately tried to start a conversation with me on various topics. There was dueling, Quidditch, schooling and one time we talked about his daughter Rose. A strange girl, I can't shake the feeling that they have raised her so sheltered that she has become extremely timid. Really a strange family." Alex shook his hands, not seeing the relieve on his mothers face as she heard what Potter had talked to her son about. As it seemed both Alex and Potter had not found any real connection, something Selene was grateful for as it would keep her son away from these persons, the people she wanted him to never meet again if possible.

The next day the grand finale took place. The students from Durmstrang still remembered the last fight and had already warned the medics to prepare for extensive injuries. And true to their expectations Alex and Victor had a repetition of their last fight, the pure strength and brutality both used to beat the other surprising everyone. The fight was much shorter then Alex clash with Elena but only because both students were unable to go any longer due to their wounds. Cuts, bruises and broken bones stopped both from taking the fight to another height. They did not hold back and everyone could see what would await those who stood in the way of either of them. In the end it was again Alex who bested Victor, but only narrowly after breaking Victors wandhand, rendering him unable to continue any further. During the fight the entire stadium was deadly silent but as it ended the entire hall erupted in cheers once again. Reporters were standing around the ring taking photos of Alex and Victor as Alex helped his beaten rival up and both hobbled towards the medics, helping each other reaching medical care.

Yeah I know the final itself was really short. But I just wrote an entire fight between these two in the last chapter and I dislike repeating myself. The strange relationship between Victor and Alex will also be an issue in the next few chapters.

About the fighting itself, I don't want Alex, Victor and Elena to be seen as super powerful or something. All comments about their strength are meant in relation to their age group and due to their training they surpass these students by far. Also the fights between Victor and Alex only end with injuries as both boys don't see any reason to hold back against their rival. That is also the reason the fight between Alex and Elena took longer, they were not holding back their skills, but were less willing to inflict injuries on the opponent.

Ah and also the first appearance of the Potters, I know most had expected Rose to be different but I have my reasons for making her the way she is at the moment. With her brothers disappearance her parents have just been really overprotective of their last remaining child, thereby making Rose very timid and fearful of strangers. She won't stay that way for ever, it is just the way I wanted her to be introduced to the story. Also I won't portray the Potters as bad people or anything of the sort, if they have trouble with Alex it will be because of their beliefs and nothing else.

That's it for now, please leave a review with your opinion, I really like to know what you people think about the story, what you liked and disliked and so on. Just leave a Review :)

Chapter 12: Realization

Once more Albus Dumbledore sat in his office, pondering the outcome of his last encounter with the young Grindelwald heir. On the other side of his desk sat James Potter, both men talking about the duel competition and the most prominent participants.

"So James, what do you think about young Alexander? I saw you talking to him most of the times you could come to watch the competition." Waiting for a reply, Dumbledore calmly took a lemon drop and began sucking on it.

"The boy is definitely not what I expected him to be. At no point did I get the feeling that he was some sort of dark lord in training or such. More the contrary, he is quite likable. A bit too rational and mature for his age, but a pleasant person none the less." James words made his mentor look at him contemplative.

"Maybe, but it could have all been a ploy. The Grindelwalds have always been very talented actors." Albus shook his head at that, seemingly remembering something from his past he would have rather forgotten.

"He didn't seem to be hiding anything while I talked to him, sure he avoided some topics but that would be expected from any pure blood heir."

"I once believed the same about his grandfather, I believed him to be a decent man... a good friend. But I was wrong to trust him so easily as it had cost me much and doomed a great many people before I finally put an end to Gellerts ambitions." Dumbledores admission of his past friendship to the Dark Lord Grindelwald was a shock for James, unable to respond anything his mentor continued. "But maybe the boy is different. He is only under the influence of his family and Kakaroff. Without his grandfather poisoning his mind with his half truths and deceits the boy might be more trustworthy."

James had finally regained his composure as he tried to change the subject as it seemed troublesome to the old wizard. "But his strength is certainly something else. All three of the Durmstrang Elites were amazing, but his fighting style was sure beyond expectation for someone so young. I have seen seasoned duelists showing only half of his talent."

"Yes and that is again a sign why he should not finish his schooling at Durmstrang. He is so advanced in dueling and fighting in general, because there one has to be the strongest to survive. Surely such an environment is ill suited for any student. I really don't know what Kakaroff is thinking by turning this school into a duel arena." At this Dumbledore only shook his head, he knew Kakaroff has always been obsessed with fighting but as it seemed his obsession influenced the school far too much. "And don't forget the ferocity of the boys last duel against Krum. Two students so young, fighting with the intention to maim and kill the other in a friendly duel, it is simply shocking."

"Their fight was hard yes. But according to that girl that is always around the Grindelwald boy, he and Krum are rivals of sorts. Neither showing the other any quarter. But she insisted that they would never kill each other, they enjoy the duel with each other far too much."

"Ah yes, the girl. So you talked to her as well. Young Ms Dupont is another enigma of Durmstrang that troubles my mind." Once more Dumbledore had a pensive look on his face.

"I only talked a few times with the girl. She seemed rather unwilling to share any information and I could only really talk to her during Alexanders duels. She seems rather quiet, but very devoted towards the Grindelwald heir."

"A Veela in Durmstrang, I must admit I wouldn't believe it, had I not seen it myself. Whatever made Kakaroff change his mind on non human students I am sure it has to do with the Grindelwald family. Also the girls surname raises more questions at this point." At this the old wizard searched his desk for a certain document he had acquired earlier. As he found it he handed it over to his protege and watched his reaction to it.

"A protocol? What is this about professor. A list of names, is this a protocol of a crime scene or something? Looks quite different from the ones we use at our department." James scanned the document, carefully reading all informations on it.

"Yes, this is the official protocol of the french Aurors that had investigated the murder of several Veela in the french Alps almost

two years ago. A friend of mine gave it to me as they had at one point suspected a group closely affiliated to the Grindelwald family. Look at the names of the victims James."

Hearing this James once more looked at the short list of names until his face showed disbelief. There were two names on the list that indeed raised a lot of questions. "Brigitte and Marie Dupont. Don't tell me..." James looked disbelieving at his mentor.

"It seems so my boy. Mother and daughter, but my contact told me that there was another daughter. But they did not find her body or any signs that she was even there. But since she was a Veela their search was only superficial, the head investigator seemed to be strongly biased against their race." At this the old wizard leaned back, one hand absentmindedly stroking his long beard.

"But why professor? Why would this girl be with the Grindelwald family if they are somehow involved in her family's deaths. This makes no sense." James shook his head.

"As little sense as a single Veela being admitted into a school that is known for its racism against creatures and mixed blood children. We don't know the reason for the massacre, neither do we know how the murderers found the Veela in the first place. The house where it happened was rather secluded."

"You mean treason? That this girl could have betrayed her family to get into the good graces of the Grindelwalds? Why would anyone do such a thing, the girl would have been around ten, no kid that age would do such things." James was affronted by the mere thought of a young girl betraying her mother and sister, sacrificing them for her own gain.

"It is only an assumption James. I do hope that this is untrue. But we know nothing about the girl and her relationship to the Grindelwalds except that she is very close to Alexander. But this might change soon, I have already sent a letter to the girls remaining living relatives, maybe they can offer us some explanations." At these words James simply nodded, still disbelieving what his mentor had just said.

For Alex and his friends the winter holidays quickly came to an end. With only one week left after the tournament they had to return

much sooner to the school than they had liked, but at least all participants were freed from the upcoming exams in January. Their participation in the tournament was enough reason for Kakaroff to have them all pass the revision exams as he believed they must know everything from the first term or else they would not have succeeded like they did.

The victorious students from Durmstrang were greeted with much commotion by their fellow students. Even though none of them were able to see any of the matches, all of Durmstrangs students had been informed of the outcome of every single duel. For some time the champions were celebrated and well liked by all other students, no matter which faction they belonged to in the school.

A week after the second term had started the euphoria finally calmed down again, the entire school returning to its usual routines. So currently Alex and his friends were busy with their physical training. Sure Kakaroff had created such activities as an optional subject with a special teacher but they kept up their own routines as the subject was only on two days of the week, insufficient.

As they had just finished their training, Ivanna approached Alex. "Hey Alex. Got a minute for me?" Ivanna looked rather unsure of herself at the moment but Alex gave her a reassuring smile and led her with a hand on her shoulder away from the rest of their group.

"So what can I do for you Ivanna? Everything alright, I hope nothing happened during the winter holidays." His inquisitive look did not betray his worry for his friend in the slightest.

"No, it is nothing like that. I haven't seen my father in months, something I am very grateful for. And even should he return Benedikt is like a rabid watchdog now. Barking and biting everyone that looks at me in an odd way." She made some placating gestures, seeing Alex relax at hearing this.

"Good, that means he got it into his head that he has a responsibility towards you." Alex gave her a reassuring smile before he looked towards their group, seeing Benedikt watch them intently.

"But that is the problem Alex. The same way I have a responsibility towards my brother. Just because he is some minutes older doesn't mean he has to do everything. And that is the reason why I wanted

to talk to you... without Benedikt. Would you please help me to become stronger, I mean really strong at something, I know I lack the physical strength that you guys have, but there must be something I am good at."

"Ivanna, I offered you and your brother long ago to train with me and Elena. The offer still stands, Benedikt already came over several times and trains with us, feel free to come as well. But now we should return back to the others or your brother might get the wrong ideas and does something stupid." He grinned at her as he lead her back to the others not really hearing her next words.

"As if he would do anything to stop such things as long as you are involved." She muttered under her breath, silent enough so Alex didn't understand it.

As soon as they had returned to their group Benedikt quickly came to his sisters side again, placing her 'safely' between him and Alex. "So what was that all about?" He tried to sound disinterested but was not really successful at that.

"Your sister requested to be part of our training and I renewed my invitation to her. She will join us from now on and that point is not debatable." Alex gave Benedikt a pointed look and so Benedikt did the only intelligent thing at that moment, he nodded mutely. At this Alex turned around towards the rest of the ever growing group of his friends and followers. "Same goes for all of you, if you really want to be useful then join us, we will find something you are good at to help our cause."

Some of the others expressed their consent, others wanted to talk to their parents first, but above all Alex knew that they would soon be strong enough to surpass the other factions at Durmstrang. The conservatives were all but gone, their leaders had graduated last year, some of the more promising students in lower years transferred away and now there was no one ready to take over the group. With the right incentive they would join his cause, Alex knew that much, but to find that would prove difficult. The revolutionists were still a force to be reckoned with, though they seemed less hostile towards Alex then the conservatives under Pajaris rule. But ever since Alex had become a student of Durmstrang he had polarized the other students, they would either support him or stay out of his way. This caused the numbers of neutral students to

decrease rapidly and with the increased number of first years that almost went to the Grindelwald camp by default, Alex faction was on the rise and soon Durmstrang would be under his control and with it he would have the future generation of ruling families in half of Europe on his side.

Rarely was it that Albus Dumbledore would leave his school on short notice during a school year, but this day he had to make an exception, leaving for France to meet the relatives of the killed Veelas, the Delacour family. Married to a promising french politician, Louis Delacour, the Veela Appolline was the only connection to the Dupont family Dumbledore could find.

"Mr Dumbledore, I am glad you could meet me on such short notice. I must say I was quite surprised myself when I got your message. Is it true, have you found my niece?" The regal looking french woman sat opposed from Dumbledore on a chair in the library of the Delacour Mansion. Her face showed little emotion as she asked for her niece.

"Maybe, we cannot be sure. There are still many questions unanswered. All we know is that there is currently a twelve year old Veela girl by the name Elena Dupont attending Durmstrang under the guardianship of the Grindelwald family." Dumbledore studied the woman intently, trying to see every reaction she had to his revelation.

"Elena... yes that is indeed my nieces name. But why Durmstrang? How comes she is with the Grindelwald, they are responsible for Brigittes death." Appolline looked angry, worried and puzzled at the same time, a frown on her face.

"You call her your niece, in what relation are you to the girl? I hope you don't see this as an insult, but I was told you were only a part Veela, whereas the girl was confirmed as a pure Veela with all the abilities she should posses at her age." The old wizard knew he had to be careful with this woman, half-blood or not, she would still have the feared Veela temper and angering her could cause more trouble then its worth.

"Brigitte was my half sister. Whereas my father was a human... affair of our mother, her father was a known and respected male Veela." She paused a moment, looking pensively out of a window. "So Elena is still alive... I feared she would be dead after the sad fate of

her mother and sister. Now Elena is all alone, her father died a few years prior in an accident." Appolline shook her head sadly as she thought of her niece.

"Surely you would be able to take her in. There is no reason to keep her from her family. This way we might also be able to find out what really happened that night her mother died." The old wizard said this in an almost neutral voice, not showing his own growing interest in the happenings of that night and the Grindelwalds involvement.

"That won't be possible. Per law in this country Veela are not allowed to adopt and even as a part Veela this restriction keeps me away from her. It is the only way I could get her as my sister has stated in her will that I am not to receive custody of her children under any circumstance. You must understand that Brigitte and I weren't really on speaking terms for many years." Another sad look settled on the woman's face, regret visible in her eyes, "And I doubt that Elena would even talk to us, custody or not. Her dislike for my part of the family is even greater than her mother's..." She sighed deeply before she looked at the old wizard. Seeing his inquisitive look she slightly shook her head, making him understand that she would not elaborate on that fact.

"Is there nothing you can tell me? Anything would help us in this situation." Albus was disappointed, the entire meeting had given him no answers, only showing the strained family relations of the Duponts and Delacours.

"There is one thing, one ...oddity. The night my sister died I received an owl from her, the first in many years. It was a shock to me. The bird only held a scroll in his claws, no name on it, no return address. But it was her owl that I knew for sure. The scroll was written in a language I couldn't read and neither could my husband or anyone else we asked about it. The auror who came to ask questions about my sister's death dismissed the scroll as meaningless girl post. But I am sure there must be something about it." With this she stood up and walked over to a bookshelf with a small box on it. She opened the box and retrieved the scroll, her sister's last message. As she handed Dumbledore the scroll he looked over it with great interest.

"Oh my, I must have been decades since I had last seen this language. Might I take this scroll with me to study it in more detail? I

am sure I can translate it, given enough time to do so." As he spoke his eyes never left the scroll.

"Take it, but whatever you may find, please tell me why my sister had to die that night. We may have had our problems in the past, but I want to know who took away any chance I had to ever reconcile with her." Dumbledore nodded in consent still firmly studying the scroll. He remained only a few more minutes with the woman before he returned to Hogwarts, intent to translate the contents of this mysterious missive.

Time passed by quickly in Durmstrang, June had come and with it the last month of the school year. But this month was also hated among the students, exams in nearly all subjects made these last thirty days tiresome for the children. But no less they studied hard and trained even harder, the expectations were high and perfection was required of the children, their parents wouldn't accept anything less. So even on the weekends the students were training, the practical exams were deemed more important by the High Master and made up most of their final end year mark. And so this also became a time when the young Grindelwalds training group gained many new members, the success of the groups members was more than enough proof that joining Grindelwald for this was worth any trouble, especially when Alexander emphasized that they were open to anyone and wouldn't require further commitment to anything outside the training hours.

To Alex it was more than a simple gesture of benevolence helping other students, even those who were not on his side. Such acts steadily built up trust, trust that could one day lead to the kind of loyalty he required of all students at Durmstrang. Influencing them was much easier this way. To Alex surprise even Victor joined their group, though only to have more chances to test his skills against Alex. Besides training for the exams and training on his broom Victor didn't anything else these days, his stubborn will to improve himself won him the respect of most others including Alex. He remembered his grandfathers words that Krum would make a fine addition to their ranks, though Alex still wondered how he could get the older boy to join his side.

Alex walked around the training ground they had used this day, the weather and temperature were pleasant enough to train outside so they had relocated from the underground training hall to a large

grass field a bit off from the schools main building. Alex watched the other students dueling, Benedikt was facing his sister, an uneven match. Though Ivanna had improved the last months since she had started seriously training with them, she still had a long way to go to reach at least her brothers skill. Benedikt wasn't bad, but his recklessness cost him most of his duels. He loved to make a show out of his fights, something Alex knew he had to break him of.

As he continued he saw Victor in a rather strained duel against Elena, despite his reluctance to admit it at first he now showed more respect towards the young Veela, her strength and skill had impressed the Bulgarian. Though Victor won most of their duels he knew that Elena was the only one except Alex that would provide a challenge to him. His long training by his family and the High Master Kakaroff demanded of him to find challenges and not victims he had once said as Benedikt wanted to fight him. Benedikt was rather pissed after that and still fought against Victor, only to be beaten rather thoroughly. Benedikt started his training when he came to Durmstrang whereas Victor once stated that his family wanted him to become a duelist, though in the end now Victor would become a Quidditch player instead. The difference in their experience was massive so Benedikt never stood a chance at that time. But this also caused Alex to wonder about Elena, she could easily stand up to both Victor and him, though he only knew of her training since she became his servant, her life before that was a great mystery as the girl never really talked about it and Alex decided not to prod her to talk about her past since he still felt the guilt of being responsible for her families deaths.

As Alex walked on he saw one sole figure standing a bit offside from the duels, a small grin appeared on his face as he saw one of the few people that still refused to even attend this training. "What an honor to have you here, dear Lilith? May I inquire why you have decided to grace us with your presence?" His antics caused her to look at him rather annoyed before she had even uttered one single word.

"I want to fight you, that is why I am here. Our fight during the competition was unfair and I will not let you make a fool out of me." She scowled at him what caused him even more amusement.

"Ah if you really feel that way I will oblige you with a chance for revenge. But may I inquire what exactly you mean by unfair?" He

tried looked dismayed at her, but failed miserably as he couldn't really stop grinning. Ever since the competition he had found it fun to tease the girl, nothing serious but enough to shake her composure every time she came across him. Teasing her was the only kind of childish action Alex allowed himself at Durmstrang, the place where eleven year old children already had to show much maturity due to the competition at school.

"You made me slip on that blasted ice you created, this duel was about fighting each other not causing mayhem in the arena." She tried to regain her impassive look but pent up anger made it impossible for her.

Alex now stood opposed to her, both of them holding their wands ready to begin the duel. And soon both started hurling spells and curses at each other, though they started with rather low strength spells to test their opponent. "You should know that there was nothing unfair about it Lilith. Fighting and dueling means more than just aiming your wand at your adversary and cast spells." He evaded another bludgeon curse from the girl, seeing her still glaring at him. Apparently she did not understand what he wanted to express. "Your father most likely got you some great and honorable teachers, but Lilith believe me fighting these days is less about honor and more about surviving and winning at all cost."

"No pride? No honor? You fight like rabid animals. Have you ever seen anyone fighting as fierce as you and Krum? That is no sport, that is brutality. You fight as if you wanted to kill." She had a hard time evading his spell-chains, several different spells, each requiring a different shield left her little choice but to evade.

"I have already killed Lilith, remember Pajari. I don't want to, but in some situations it's fight or die. I have too much to live for to let myself be killed. Each fight must be taken seriously. You may see fighting without restraints in a competition as unfair, dishonorable. I don't." He wove another chain of spells and sent them at Lilith in rapid succession, seeing her jump to the side to avoid the spells. But to his surprise she didn't get up again instead he heard a muffled scream and saw her lying on the ground holding her ankle, her wand abandoned by her side.

"This is why I told you that you shouldn't fight. You get distracted and don't watch your surroundings. That hole you tripped over was

plain visible even from my side during the fight." He shook his head slowly before he looked at her again, seeing her foot in a rather odd angle to her leg. "This looks rather serious, I'm gonna take you back to the doctors." He walked over to her to help her but he only got her to pick up her wand and point it at him.

"Stay away, I can do fine on my own." She tried to push herself up, only to land on her posterior once more with a painful expression on her face.

"Forget your stupid pride for a moment. I will help you and bring you to the doctors even if I have to stun you to do it. False pride in such situations makes things only worse, that was the first lesson my father taught me after I got hurt during our training when I was younger." She relented and let him help her up only to be pulled onto his back as he picked her up and carried her back towards the school under the curious gazes of most other students.

Lilith wanted to protest but the pain in her ankle changed her mind. Hanging on his back, her arms around his neck and her head on his shoulder she sulked, this was definitely not what she had planned for that day. "You know you once said you think of me as an enigma. Seeing that I am at least partly responsible for your predicament I will answer you one question to help you along with solving this mystery." Alex spoke with a little humor in his tone, unable to see her astonished face when she heard his words.

"What? You want me to ask you something? Anything and you would answer?" He nodded slightly, not daring to look to his shoulder that she had leaned her head on. "Okay oh great Lord Grindelwald, tell me why you do this all ? Why are you recruiting students like you are building an army?" The question was simple, the answer though... was not.

"Well I can't elaborate on all facts as we have neither the time nor would I talk to anyone without an oath first so I will stick to my main incitement. Ever since I was little my last name attracted lunatics and toadies. I am the heir of Gellert Grindelwald so people expect me to be powerful, to follow his beliefs and continue where he failed. But I don't want to. Yes it may seem that I follow his footsteps but believe me I have different reasons." He paused a moment and sighed.

"I wish to change our society so at least my children can one day grow up without the same shit I have to go through. They should be allowed to grow up without stupid politics, without murder and violence, just being kids like any other. I have also sworn to do the same for Elena, so she and her children won't be persecuted just for being not human. This stupid bigotry is getting us nowhere, we are all magical beings and there are greater threats out there than to quarrel among ourselves." As he finished he would have laughed at the way Lilith gaped at him. It took her a few moments before she had entirely processed what he had told her.

"You two are really close, aren't you?" There was a short pause before Lilith elaborated. "You and Elena I mean. She is always around you, hell they even say she lives with your family."

Alex laughed softly at this. "Yeah, we are somewhat close. But not in the way you might think, we are far too young to even start thinking in that direction if you ask me. Elena has endured much and I am one of the causes of her past pain. Despite everything she is a close friend. I don't know why but she once said she saw something in my eyes. She believes that the eyes are a mirror of one's soul." They slowly neared the school's hospital, people on the way looking at the two students strangely.

"Maybe she is right, about that mirror thing. Who knows." She drifted off a bit.

"Lilith?" Alex's inquiry got a muffled sound in response. "I know this might sound a bit weird, but do you by any chance know what our parents are up to? I mean every time they meet they send us away to do something together without them. Call me paranoid but I do believe they are planning something behind our backs."

"You are paranoid, extremely so. But you are right, they plan something, I guess you can figure out what most likely. And quite frankly I hate it and I would never agree to such a stupid thing like a marriage contract. These things are one of the reasons I hate politics in our world, they treat persons like goods you can trade for favors."

Alex kept silent, by now they had reached the hospital and had found a doctor to take care of Lilith's broken ankle. "Why is it that most of the times you come here it is to deliver another hurt young

girl Mr Grindelwald?" The doctor jested, "It is almost like you have some hero complex to save damsels in distress or something like that." Alex looked rather annoyed at the doctor, the last thing he needed was to have him start stupid rumors. But at least it seemed to amuse Lilith who knew that most of these 'damsels' got hurt because they were with him. Alex once more rolled his eyes before he turned around to leave. "Take care of her doc. See you later Lilith."

The rest of the month passed rather uneventful, even the usual end of year speech of the High Master was rather dull this year. Kakaroff simply boasted with his schools success at the dueling competition. He really didn't do much else for months now. He had even ordered the eight Durmstrang champions to keep on wearing their special uniforms all year, so everyone could see the glorious winners from his school, not that there ever were any outside guests to the school who could see them anyway.

Two weeks after the end of his second year Alex found himself once more climbing up the endless stairs of Nurmengard to see his grandfather. He knew what this wall all about. His grandfather wanted to hear in person how their plans proceeded so far, despite being informed through letters on a monthly basis. Alex found his grandfather like so often before in his chair at the desk near the rooms only window, a book on his lap while the old man looked outside.

"You wished to see me, grandfather?" Alex spoke respectfully, his eyes averted to the ground.

"Yes, yes. There are things we have to discuss, my heir. Take a seat this may take a while." The old wizard gestured towards another chair on the opposite side of the desk. "I have read your reports and I must say I am not impressed Alexander. You still struggle for the control over the school. I wonder what keeps you from taking out those other factions, one is gone already why hesitate with those cocky revolutionists?" He looked pointedly at Alexander.

"The revolutionists are rather hard to convince. We got the remnants of the conservatives in our ranks now, that makes them suspicious of us."

"That is why I told you to find an agenda for your group. You need it if you want to coax them towards joining you. Something that will arouse their interest. Have you still not found anything that coincides with our plans that will get them to join you?" The old wizard was fully in his grumpy teacher mode, lecturing his grandson.

"Nothing that would do well with our situation or my own ideals." Alex looked at the book his grandfather had been reading before he came, to his surprise it was about muggle politics.

"Ah yes, your father mentioned this with a hint of pride last time we spoke. You want to create a world for yourself and that Veela you have so your children can live peacefully. Listen to me boy, such a world does not exist and can never be." Grindelwalds tone was cold, uncaring about whether his grandson wanted to believe it or not.

"What do you know, grandfather. You have been stuck here for so many years, how can you possibly measure what is possible and what is not in our world as things are today." Alex was challenging his grandfather, usually a stupid idea but he would not let go of his vow that easily.

The old wizard ignored his heirs disrespect and answered the question, slowly as if he tried to explain it to a young child. "Some things will never change. People will always hate and distrust. You want to gain peace? Then you would have to get all magical beings to serve you together. And that would never work." Alex looked at Grindelwald with an arched eyebrow showing his confusion. "People always need someone to hate, someone to fear. Every form of government rules through fear. I instilled the fear of the muggle world into the peoples hearts so they would follow me, that upstart Voldemort became a symbol of fear himself after using the Purebloods fear of losing their power to gain them as servants. And even today our governments only control the people because there is someone the people fear and the people expect their leaders to protect them. It is simple as that. Fear rules our world, never can you have all beings living together peacefully, one must always be the scapegoat."

Alex let his grandfathers words sink in, he knew that in a way his grandfather was right, but still there must be a way to achieve his goal. "And what if we only unite the magical beings against an

outside threat like the muggles. The people fear them enough to hide our entire society from them."

"That won't do. As long as we carefully hide, their threat would never be sufficient to keep the people in line, Alexander. They need a menace inside their society, something or someone they see everyday. I tried to rally our world against the muggles to show our superiority but alas it was futile. There were many who supported me but even more who did not wish to face the muggle world, content with hiding peacefully for the rests of their lives." Grindelwald ended his short lecture almost in a rant, anger about those who wouldn't understand his ideals and refused to stand with him against the threat.

"So we need a group within our society, someone we cannot hide from..." Alex trailed off, he didn't like where this was going. He couldn't deny his grandfathers logic, but still the prospect of sacrificing some group for the greater good seemed a bit over the top for him. But his grandfather wouldn't hear any of it and Alex knew one way or another this was about the only way for him to really make an impact on society big enough to be able to make the necessary changes for a better future.

"You will need a lot of followers my boy. Dumbledore and his ilk will never understand what needs to be done. They have the most wizards in Britain, sadly that is fact. Too many in our countries died in the war or left for other continents, displeased with our defeat here."

"Yes but we have more of the magical races, we will need them. Veelas, Vampires, Werewolves, Goblins, Dwarfs, Nymphs, Giants and what else walks around out there in Europe, we will need them, the Brits bigotry has driven them from the island back to the continent. It would be good to have them on our side. But who would be left out as the scapegoat..."

"We both know the answer. The one group of magical people that had the greatest impact on our society and poses a serious threat to our culture and traditions with their intention to change everything. The one group that was partly the reason why the Purebloods joined Voldemort so readily." The old wizard needn't speak it out loud, his heir already knew whom he meant.

"But going against them would make us look like dark wizards. I mean Voldemort and his fans killed them indiscriminately." Alex was unsure, he was used to being thought of as a dark wizard just because of his last name but this was something completely different. This was like giving them solid proof of what they had accused him of without knowing anything.

"But they are the only sound choice, my heir. The Muggleborn are a threat to our society, to its culture, its values and its tradition. Unlike the creatures you want to include in your utopia these people have not grown up within our society. They come and think they can change our way of life just so they can feel more at home. They try to turn our society into a copy of the muggle society and that is another reason for choosing them." Grindelwald paused a moment to see if his heir understood what he meant.

"They are by extension part of the muggle world, they would seem like intruders to our world. A tangible threat within our society that is backed up by the greatest fear of our people and the magical beings." Alex hated the very thought of it, but his grandfather's plan would gain him many allies... and many enemies.

"Yes. You understand fast. Create your Unity of the magical races to stand tall against this menace, make this your agenda and a great many people will follow you, Alexander." Grindelwald's words were filled with enthusiasm. He got his heir to this point, all that Alexander would have to do now is accept this as the only way. Yes Gellert Grindelwald's dream of the magical world reigning supreme over the muggle world would come true, his heir would unite their world and then he would take them to do the next step and conquer the rest, all hidden in the shadows while his grandson would follow his instructions.

Alex rubbed his temples as he sighed. He knew that his grandfather had ulterior motives for sending him on this path and he knew that Gellert Grindelwald would not be content with waiting here in his room once the fighting for a new world order had begun. But still there was little choice and his grandfather's words made sense. "Fine... you are right, grandfather. I will do it this way. But I will need some time to find a way to spread this agenda among my followers." Alex saw the old wizard smile at him, his smile was one of pride of his heir, while his eyes had a gleeful glint to them. Somehow Alex couldn't shake the feeling that he had just sold his soul to the devil...

I really had a hard time writing this chapter, not because of a lack of ideas, quite the contrary I have more ideas for this story then I can add to it, but more I struggled with the way I would introduce his agenda and how it came to this. I know this all sounds really twisted at the end but I hope I have not offended anyone with some of the allusions in Gellerts political ... ideals.

Oh well please don't kill me for this, I won't turn Alex into Voldie 2.0. The conclusion of his chat with Gellert Grindelwald may sound really bad, but I will not have him throw away his ideals and start running around killing people. This is more a kind of 'For the Greater Good' thing. Kind of 'The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few' thing, though a little more twisted. Also this was to show how the old wizard tries to impart his ideals to his heir. Things will be a bit darker but I won't have Alex/Harry turn evil all of a sudden, it just won't fit with his personality. Just wait, the next two chapters will clear up any confusion about his new agenda.

Also I gave Lilith a little more importance this time while Elena was only mentioned and the part about her was more family stuff. Elena will get more importance during the next chapter, after that I will also have a pairing as part of the story. Whether it will be Lilith or Elena will be addressed next chapter, so no conclusions yet. This pairing will have a great influence on Alex, he is greatly influenced by the women around him. His mother as the one that kept him peaceful, she kept him from any dark thoughts by teaching him her own ideals of love and peace, a great contrast to Gellerts teachings. And Elena with him in her role as friend and confidant so far, her being a Veela giving him the idea to include non human races into his dream of a peaceful world. Whoever ends up with Alex will have a great deal of influence on him, she will be his partner in life and act as such.

Also there are two more chapters left to the first half of the story, after that the real confrontations will begin with both sides fully established. Think of the first 14 chapters as the 'Conquest of Durmstrang' or something like that. After the next two chapters I will also have a minor leap in time to Alex sixth year. Oh well you will all see what I mean after the next chapters.

Once again please leave Reviews, they have been extremely helpful so far and I really appreciate the input.

Chapter 13: Relations

A few days after Alex's fateful discussion with his grandfather he finally decided to share his thoughts with his closest friends. Even though Elena and the Kasakow twins were his closest friends he still felt strange about telling them what he had agreed on with the old Grindelwald. He took his time explaining every detail, every reason he could find for his agenda. His friends listened with quite different reactions. Benedikt absorbed almost every word coming from Alex, often showing his consent by nodding or other gestures, though he did not say a single word. Unlike her brother Ivanna seemed more reluctant, none the less she listened to Alex's reasoning. Her face was mostly impassive as she sat silently through the entire process. Elena though was torn. When Alex started about the problem the muggleborns posed to their society and the necessity to deal with them Elena was shocked. She had never before seen Alex as one of the biased people that damned others for their blood status. But now he was here, talking about those who should not be part of their society because of their upbringing and origin. But what astonished her the most Alex continued with his thesis. His willingness to include magical races as somewhat equal to wizards and witches was a strange contrast to his perception of muggleborns.

So they sat there in Alex's private study in the mansion his parents had bought near Berlin, no one saying a word after Alex had finished. Alex felt insecure as he watched how his friends would react. But after some moments of silence Alex was the first to speak up again. "I know this is a lot to take in. I can fully understand if anyone of you no longer feels able to continue on this path with me. I will not hold it against you. You three are my closest friends and I will respect your own wishes and beliefs. I will even release you from your oath to support me should you feel unable to stand by my side in this matter."

All three looked at Alex a bit shocked at the insecurity in his tone. They all knew where their future would lead them and their fate seemed decided. All they had left to do was to voice their decision to their leader.

"Alex, I can currently only speak for myself here, but I can assure you of one thing. I would follow you to the very end of whatever path you chose. You are my friend, a true friend. You had shown me my responsibilities and I will not run away from them ever again. As

much as it is my responsibility to protect my family it is also my duty to stay true to my friends. Never doubt me, I am with you." Benedikts exclamation got him a relieved smile from Alex. Alex knew that Benedikt had always looked up to him, he reasoned it was Benedikts upbringing that he was so supportive of Grindelwalds heir. But to hear Benedikt calling him a true friend was unexpected, they only knew each other for little more than two years now and still the young Russian felt this way about him.

Ivanna watched the scene between her brother and his best friend with mixed feelings. On the one hand she felt happy for both of them, but on the other hand she was unsure where this all would lead them now. Being friends with Alex could be their undoing as well as their chance to become more than just another simple pure blood family. For some moments she closed her eyes, willing herself to come to a decision. When she opened them again she saw both Alex and Benedikt watch her with undisguised curiosity.

"Ivanna? What will you do now?" Benedikt looked at his sister, he would not force her to anything, it was his duty to protect her and support her but he would hate to see her leave them now.

Ivanna sighed softly before she focused on Alex. "I will follow you the same way my brother does. I don't know where this all will lead us, but I am willing to see this through to the end. I just hope this won't be our bane. Lead us Alex, we shall follow you, but lead us well so we may see the future you wish to create with this choice." Her words did not miss their intended effect on Alex. He knew she followed him reluctantly, but she put her trust in him and Alex would not let her down as long as he still lived. Benedikt was more than relieved that moment. He hugged his sister happily, knowing that she would still be with them.

The only one left now was Elena, she had quietly watched as the Kasakow twins had assured Alex of their friendship and loyalty to him. Elena knew what she wanted, it wasn't like she had much of a different choice anyways. Alex watched her with an unreadable face, waiting silently for her speak her mind.

"I don't know what to think of this Alex. I'll be blunt, I know you hate people babbling about useless things. This new agenda of yours is very much a double edged sword for you and everyone that wants to follow you. I know how you got this idea, or to put it better I know

where the idea comes from in the first place." She looked pointedly at him. She knew of his visits to his grandfather, only few knew that the old wizard could be visited given that you know where to find him first. Most people would think quite different of Alex would they find out about his conversations with the former dark lord.

"You will gain many followers with this agenda, though some won't be the sort of people you would want to have on your side. But still many will feel drawn to you. Especially the non human races as you are promising almost equal rights in exchange for loyalty. But just like it gains you followers it will drive away many people that would have otherwise interacted with you. 'They' accuse you of being dark just for being a Grindelwald, with this agenda you will just give them solid proof and you can expect that they will start acting against you more openly." All present knew whom Elena meant when she said 'They'. It was also a given that she was right about how people would react to Alex new approach. But still she had made no comment on how she would decide.

"That may all be true about others Elena, but what about you? Will you stay with me or is this too much for you to bear? I will not force you into this, I have already caused you enough suffering, there is no way I would willingly add more to it." Alex words were truthful, ever since Elena had told him that he had killed her sister, ever since he knew that her family died because of his own family trying to protect a secret about their precious Grindelwald heir, he felt the guilt for her life turning out the way it did. She was a loyal and devoted friend, she got hurt, almost killed because of him but still she stood by his side. But she wouldn't be here if wasn't for her oath, that he was sure of.

Elena looked reproachfully at Alex. She had already told him many times that she did not blame him for her mothers and her sisters death but still he felt guilty because of it. "You might remember I am bound to you by that oath I took. From a Veela such an oath can not be broken and you cannot free me of it. But even without it I would still follow you. I will stand by your side, like it or not and it is not your fault, it is my free will. You freed me from my old life and gave me a new one with a real meaning. This is my life now and I will live it and stand by your side in whatever way you deem fit." For a moment she hesitated when she talked about her old life, so far she kept it a secret and Alex was decent enough not to pry. But with this questions would arise sooner or later, if not from Alex then from the

other two persons present. But it wouldn't change anything, her future was set.

Alex kept silent for a minute, watching Elena, then looking at Ivanna and Benedikt. "Thank you, all of you. Your support means much to me. The path we are about to take will be hard. But we will not bow and we will only stop once we have created the future we hope for. If future generations will damn me for what I am about to do so be it, but I will do it knowing that I try to create a future where people like me will no longer be necessary."

"Well then, lets start thinking about how we spread the word. There are a lot of people out there just waiting for us to come and lead them into that future." Benedikts cheerful demeanor was almost contagious and soon the strange mood that had hung in the room had vanished, replaced with an open discussion about what they would do next. Together they would shake the foundations of their world, that much they were sure of.

Igor Kakaroff was quite pleased with the way his life had turned out ever since the Dark Lord Voldemort had been beaten by that Potter boy. Not that Kakaroff liked the boy or cared about his supposed death by the hand of remnant Death Eaters, but he knew without the boy his life would be much less pleasant. He had escaped prison and had come far. Being the High Master of Durmstrang now gave him the unique chance to influence the children of the pure blood families with his own view of how they should be educated. Root out the weak and support the strong.

And now he got three students that have already gained him the recognition and envy of many other schools. Krum would soon start his professional career as a Seeker and Kakaroff would be known as the man who supported the boy and gave him the chance to become famous. The Grindelwald boy already was a famous child, his name alone polarized the masses. But the High Master knew he would have to tread careful around this boy, there was no way he would serve another dark lord should the boy ever consider going dark like that fool Dumbledore already believed him to be. And then there was that Veela. He allowed her to attend his school because of the Grindelwalds families insistence. He did so reluctantly but it seemed to really pay off since now people were no longer sure whether he still was the racist man he was as a Death Eater.

Yes all was well for him and his school. And no one, not even the great leader of the light, Albus Dumbledore, could do anything against him now. But little did he know that gradually his school would no longer be under his control. Control is a fickle thing, that much the former Death Eater would soon learn. But the very moment he does it would already be too late for him.

It was late June by now, Alex thirteenth birthday was approaching fast, his parents already busy with preparing another great gathering of friends and followers, political allies and toadies. For this year they had planned a great ball in their sons honor, a festivity that would remember anyone of the importance of their family and their heir.

After hearing of Alex new plans his parents had mixed feelings about their son. Conrad was proud of his son, the maturity needed to come to the conclusions he had made for his agenda was beyond expectation. He knew that Gellert had very much influenced his sons decisions on this, but Alex had added his own morals to the plan, a walk on a tightrope for the boy, but a testament of character, at least that was how Conrad described his sons decisions whenever he was asked about them. Selene though was not happy with her sons new approach to fulfill his dreams. She feared he might go dark should he continue walking down the path her father had laid out for his heir. But she was determined to keep her son from falling and to do that she was willing to stand against her father and keep her son away from the old wizard as much as possible. Her son had to walk his own path and Gellert Grindelwald should not deter Alex. Neither Gellert nor Dumbledore for the matter would be allowed to poison her sons mind with their ideals as long as Selene had a say in it.

Together with his closest friends Alex had formulated his agenda in a way they could present it to the public. It took them many hours in the library finding the right way for it. They had decided to christen their agenda as the 'Unity Theses'. The Unity of all magical races against the threat to their way of life. To back up their claim for Unity they had also come to the conclusion that they would need more children from magical races in Durmstrang, something Alex would discuss with the High Master as soon as they returned to school in September. They would also need more of these children within their own group, currently Elena was the only non human in Alex group of followers, but that should soon be changed.

At the end of their discussions Alex and his friends had also decided on a name for their group, a name that would both be admired and feared by the people. They would call themselves the 'Crimson Covenant', crimson as it was the color most people attributed to Alex, the color he had chosen for his own banner that would now also be the banner of the Covenant. By calling themselves a Covenant they wanted to underline the very theses that would from now on guide their hands.

The day before his birthday Alex felt utterly bored. His parents kept him from most of the mansion that day including the library and training rooms, leaving him with little to do. He went to find Elena to see whether she knows anything to pass the time, but seeing her nowhere in the house he was only left with looking for her in her room. For some reason he had never bothered going there, in all the years Elena now lived with his family he never even once entered her room. It was in a different section of the mansion, far away from his own or his parents bedrooms.

When he finally reached her room he knocked, waiting patiently for an answer, unsure whether she actually was in her room or off somewhere helping his parents. But he didn't wait long before Elenas soft voice beckoned him to enter. Elenas room was rather plain, white was the dominant color, it almost seemed like it was the only color she really wanted in her room at all. But there was not much beside the normal furniture. No pictures or anything else on the bare walls. The room was for the lack of a better word... sterile.

"Yeah? What can I do for you Alex? Do you need me for something?" His appearance seemed to wonder her greatly, after all he had never before visited her in her own room here.

"Nay. Just wanted to see whether you are up to something. Today is so boring I doze off most of the time. You ain't got an idea what to do today?" He looked almost hopeful at her, waiting for a positive reply that would save him from dying of boredom. She sighed before she walked towards her bed and placed the book she had been holding on the nightstand next to the bed.

"I guess the training room and the library are closed, else you would be most likely there. Garden is off limits to you because of the party preparations there like in most of the rest of the house." Alex simply nodded while Elena continued recounting the things he couldn't do

or places he shouldn't be this day. Alex meanwhile looked around the room, hoping to find at least anything that would tell a bit about what Elena liked and disliked. To his dismay he had to admit that he never really found out much about his oldest friend, she always adapted to what he did and liked, never really showing off any of her own interests. He tried to see the title of the book had placed on her nightstand but found himself unable to see it. In the end his gaze lingered on her desk, a large stack of letters lying there, unopened. Judging by the seal visible on some of the letters they all came from the same person.

"What's up with these letters Elena? Not gonna read them?" When he walked over to the desk Elena almost ran towards the letters trying to take them away before Alex could get his hands on them. Alex was surprised by this, this was most unusual for her. "What, a secret I am not supposed to know about?" His voice was filled with mirth. "Possibly a secret admirer? Quite persistent fellow, so many letters. If you are bothered by him tell me, I will see to it that he leaves you alone." He would have laughed at this situation and Elena's strange reactions, but when her face suddenly held a pained expression his amusement was gone immediately.

"No, not an admirer. These letters... they are from a person that claims... claims to be my family." She seemed unsure whether she should tell this to Alex or not, but she did not want to lie to him.

"Family? So why aren't you reading them? You should be happy if there are some relatives of you left out there. Nothing is more important than family Elena." He looked at her worriedly when he saw her slump on her bed, sadness visible in her eyes.

"You don't understand. I read the first... but I can't answer them, I don't want them. They have never been any family of mine... I hate them." Her last admission disconcerted Alex quite a bit. Her hate was more than evident in her voice, never had he heard her speak about anyone like this. He was unsure whether to continue this conversation, but somehow he knew it would be better for his friend to get the pent up anger out of her system before it would start destroying her from within.

"Care to elaborate? Who are they?" Alex sat down on the bed next to her, looking worriedly. She remained silent, only shaking her head softly, but Alex knew he shouldn't stop here. "Elena, either you tell

me or I will simply have to open one of these letters. It isn't good to bottle up your feelings so either you tell me yourself or I get the information elsewhere and find a way to help you." His tone was commanding, not the first time Alex had talked to her in that way but it was still odd for her.

"No... I should have destroyed this dreaded letters long ago... I..." She couldn't continue as Alex continued on before she could say another word.

"And yet you kept them. For whatever reason you kept them, you must still want to know what they want. They have a reason why they write you and you have one to not destroy their letters."

"I know very well why they write. The first letter came sometime after the competition... they were put up to it by that Dumbledore... they would have never written because they wanted to... they don't care about me and I am fine with that. I hate those imbeciles." Alex got her to put more emotions into this one statement than he had heard from her during the entire last school year. Her anger and hurt ran deep...

Alex muttered curses in German and Russian under his breath when Elena mentioned the meddlesome old goat, getting angry himself that the man had the audacity to still try and fuck up their lives. Be he couldn't get angry now, Elena definitely needed help sorting out the mess that were her feelings at the moment.

"You still haven't told me who 'they' actually are to you. Please Elena trust me, if there is a way I will do what I can to help you." His voice was soft again, all anger pushed aside for the moment. He placed a hand on Elenas shoulder, giving it a small squeeze.

Elena gulped, she didn't want this, to go through this again, to tell Alex about this... but he wouldn't let it slide now, she would have to tell him... something at least. "They are my... aunt and her ilk... my mothers self righteous half sister. Just because the bitch married a wealthy french politician she always looked down upon us. She and her arrogant daughter. She always belittled my sister, my mother and me... going on about how ... disgusted she was with how we lived our lives." In her anger a single tear escaped her eyes.

Alex was at loss, not really knowing what to say to this revelation. "And then we came and destroyed what was left of your family... I.. I am sorry, Elena." This all didn't help Alex with the feeling of guilt he had towards the young Veela for ruining her life.

"No..." She gently shook her head as she looked towards him. "You didn't destroy my life. You saved from the dreaded life I had before... you never ruined it. Living with my mother had become... difficult ever since our father had died. It didn't help that in that situation even the last of our family finally abandoned us. My grandmother abandoned us, disowning my mother because of what she had become. No one was there for us... no one." In her anger Elena clenched her fist till her nails drew blood. Alex was simply sitting there with her, his hand still supportive on her shoulder as he listened.

"And it was all that bitch of a half sisters fault. Despite her being the bastard child our grandmother stood on her side, turning her back on us when we needed her the most... My mother didn't take this too well. She became bitter, hate filled. She stopped caring about me and Marie... at least she cared about Marie again once she was old enough to follow in her footsteps..." Elena swallowed hard, it was the first time she talked about this to anyone. She felt unsure whether it was right, but Alex simply sat there, listening, his face showing compassion and not the kind of disgust she always feared should her past be revealed.

Alex wanted to say something... anything but he didn't know what. Before he found any words she continued. "You should never believe that you destroyed my family Alex... my family... my family ceased to exist the day my father died. There were only people with the same surname and blood left but no... family." At the end she started crying silently. Sitting there on her bed as her past returned to haunt her for one last time.

Alex felt so much at loss, he knew how to fight, knew his ways around politics, how to act around certain people and manipulate them. But here he was utterly at loss. Next to him sat the girl that had become his closest friend, crying about her painful past. The very girl that always seemed aloof and controlled. But today he cracked the shell she had placed around herself, he got her to show him what made her act the way she does. And he didn't know how to react to this. So he did the only thing he could think about doing

that moment, he drew her closer and held her in a gentle embrace, letting her cry on his shoulder. She stiffened at first, shocked by the contact but in the end she relented and let it all out, all the hurt and frustration she had bottled up for years. It was also this very moment that Alex realized what it was that Elena longed for the most. The one thing she never had and always desired. A family. It was the moment he knew that this also was the very thing he wanted to give her. A place she could return to whenever she felt lost. People she could trust indiscriminately. He would give her a family, but he would have to talk to his parents about this first. The day after his birthday he would address this to his parents.

Alex sat there with Elena for another hour until she fell asleep, mentally exhausted from going through all of this again. But Alex knew it was for the best she had let it all out now before it destroyed her from within. He softly lay her on her bed to let her sleep, he knew this was painful for her but she was strong and would feel better once she woke up, now that the burden of hiding her past was gone, at least a part of it, her mother still remained a mystery. On his way out he saw the letters, still stacked on her desk. Alex scowled when he remembered that this all was started by Dumbledore trying to meddle in their lives again. But he had to admit in the end it was for the best for Elena how this had played out, but still he would not let this slide, he would find a way to keep the old man out of their lives for good.

Then Alex birthday came. The morning was still rather quiet, only Alex family and closest friends were present, the masses that had been invited would arrive in the afternoon and evening for the ball that Selene had organized for her sons birthday. Enjoying the last silent hours before the storm Alex spent in the library with Benedikt, Selene had taken Elena and Ivanna elsewhere so they had all the necessary time to get ready for the evening. So now it was just the boys.

"So are you excited about this evening, Alex?" Benedikt lounged in one of the chairs while Alex walked among the bookshelves, searching a book he hadn't already finished, but to his dismay he knew all of them.

"Why should I be excited, Benedikt? It isn't the first ball I have to attend." Alex looked bored over to where Benedikt was sitting, before he walked over to a window to look outside to see the garden

that had been prepared for the evening. The guests would be inside and outside of the building. The mansion his parents had bought was quite big, but still the number of guests on the list was too high. "This is madness... have you seen what they have prepared outside? All this commotion just because of my birthday."

"Yeah it is kind of strange. Never heard of anyone celebrating a thirteenth birthday this way. Special birthdays yes but just a normal one like this one... it is a bit over the top." Benedikt had finally gotten up and joined his friend near the window, watching the servants and some house elves running around to finish the preparations for today's great event.

"Normally thirteen is not a number people would celebrate but my mother is different in that regard. She always says thirteen is lucky number, maybe that is why she wants to have such an exaggerated party." Alex shook his head before he walked back to the bookshelves.

"Lucky? Really? I always heard it was bad luck... Oh well it is just a number anyways. But such a party, man you are really lucky you know. There will be so many nice girls attending today trying to get your attention. This ball is a testament of your families power, influence and wealth." Benedikt always found something good in anything, to Alex this day would be annoying, but the young Russian would make sure that he would enjoy it 'somehow'.

"I just hope it will be more peaceful than my eleventh birthday, I would hate to have to kill someone today." Alex mumbled absentmindedly, not seeing Benedikt's questioning look. When the boy asked about it Alex remembered that Benedikt wasn't there that day, they had first met some weeks later on the ship to Durmstrang. "On that day Dumbledore and his vigilantes came and tried to take me away from my family... for my own safety of course." Alex almost spat the last part, he wouldn't tolerate the old man this evening... or ever again for the matter. The day before with Elena and Dumbledores repeated attempts to meddle with their lives was still fresh in his memory. "Then he had the gall to demand that I would be sent to Hogwarts to learn from him what is right and wrong. I tell you that man only sees his little black and white world, he will mean even more trouble in the future."

Benedikt knew that Alex had a profound dislike for the self appointed leader of the light, but he always thought it was some sort of family business, after all Dumbledore was the one who defeated Alex grandfather. But this meant that the animosity originated from the old mans actions directed at his friend. Benedikt wouldn't sit by and watch while Alex would stand against the manipulator, he would stand by his side, just like most other members of the covenant.

Before they could further talk about the unpleasant topic Dumbledore Alex father came to fetch the boys so they could prepare in time for the ball. In a few short hours the first guests would arrive and Alex would have to greet them personally. He had to look his best for that.

Dressed to impress he greeted one family after another, a endless stream of well wishers, some friends, but mostly strangers he had barely heard of before. But also all those who had already sworn themselves to his service were present, they had greeted the founding of the Covenant and the Unity Theses enthusiastically, not one of them had objected Alex agenda. He presented power and they all wanted a part of this power.

To Alex surprise even Victor had come to the ball, now that Victor had quit the dueling in favor of his Quidditch career they were no longer rivals like before, but they were still far from friends. Victors presence was a sign of respect for the Grindelwald family and maybe some more personal reasons the Bulgarian would not share at the moment.

Once the last of the guests had arrived things went almost like his last birthday, his parents could be found chatting idly with the German minister and his wife while they told him to entertain Lilith, though said girl seemed a bit absent minded this evening. So he stood there with her, Benedikt, Ivanna and Elena waiting for what would happen next. He slowly sipped his drink as he waited for what his parents had planed this evening, next up would be the dinner, then dancing and freely enjoying the evening until the last of the guests would have left. Alex knew it would be a very long night for him.

And soon the lunch began, several large tables had been set, each had another group of people seated around it. All the children sat around the same table as Alex. He sat with Benedikt to his right and

Lilith to his left. Next to Benedikt sat Elena with Victor on her other side and Ivanna on Victor's right side. Alex found the seating arrangement suspicious, but he knew he should have expected it by now. His family would always try to push him towards the minister's daughter, not that he minded much but they mostly seemed at odds with each other, arguing about even the slightest things.

On another table Conrad stood up to speak, the chatter that had filled the room quickly subsided, all eyes directed at Alex's father. "I wish to thank all of you for coming today to celebrate the thirteenth birthday of my dear son Alexander. All of you are friends and allies of the Grindelwald family and having you here for this joyous occasion honors us." Friendly murmur could be heard from the people. Being regarded as friend of the Grindelwald family was worth a lot if one wanted to have any influence on the politics in some countries these days.

But Conrad wasn't finished yet. "But we are also here for another special occasion. I wish to announce my son's betrothal to the lovely Lilith Falkenstein, daughter of my dear friend Heinrich and his beautiful wife Cassandra. Shall the union of our children bring them both joy and fortune for the rest of their lives." This announcement came rather unexpected for most, well they did expect it would come to this but no one believed it to happen this early.

To Alex this came as a shock. He started choking on his drink from the shock of this announcement. Benedikt clapped on his back trying to help him, to most people on other tables this must have looked like he congratulated his friend. Lilith next to Alex looked rather pale, currently she wished to be anywhere but not next to Alex in a room where she couldn't escape without causing a scene. Alex looked at her incredulously, but seeing her obvious discomfort soothed him somewhat. He needed to talk to her, in private, but they would have to wait at least until the first dance was over before they could go outside to talk without anyone listening in.

The reactions of most other people at the table were mixed. While most seemed to be happy for the new couple there were some who looked suspicious after Alex's first reaction. Benedikt looked oddly amused by the entire situation, his sister though watched Alex and Lilith closely, unsure what to think about the fate the parents had chosen for their children. She knew she would have ended in a similar situation hadn't her father left, well her mother might still

arrange something for all she knew. Elena looked unsure, she knew this was a surprise to Alex, but whether he was pleased with this or not was unknown to her. Victor was the most curious of them all. He spotted an expression of great contentedness, why though was a mystery.

The evening progressed slowly. Some people came by, congratulating Alex and Lilith, their parents though kept their distance for the moment, knowing that Alex would most likely be angry with them, even though he wouldn't do anything foolish at such a party. The dancing began and after the first dance Alex quickly led Lilith outside into the garden. He needed to clear up some things and it was best to do it unsupervised.

In a secluded spot in the garden they both sat on a stone bench, quiet at first until Alex spoke. "You knew, Lilith. You knew that they would do this." It wasn't a question, his tone made it more like an accusation. He watched Lilith intently, waiting for a reaction from her. She didn't look at him, she watched the final rays of the sun as it disappeared behind the horizon. "I asked you not a month ago about this Lilith... why didn't you tell me? Why did you lie to me? The way you acted all evening was proof enough that you knew."

Finally she looked at him, her eyes shining with resolve. "I really wanted to, Alex. But I found myself unable. I wanted to tell you and believe me I wanted to stop this... but in the end it felt wrong when I tried to talk my parents out of this. I didn't want to involve you, I wanted to solve this by myself, but in the end I didn't want them to stop." Alex looked at her astonished. "I don't know why but I wanted it to happen. I really disliked you because of the way you treated me since the competition, but in the end I wanted this to happen. I know you hate liars and I know you will most likely want to break this all up as soon as possible... I will oblige if that is truly your wish." Her gaze wandered back to the horizon where the sun had disappeared, no longer able to look at Alex.

He pondered his situation for a moment before he put his arm around her shoulder, drawing her closer to him. "I have really been an ass sometimes I guess, but think about it. You could have done a lot worse, just think they would have wanted to marry you off to Victor."

His reaction shocked her, it was not what she had expected. "But I lied to you, why do you react this way? I thought you hate liars."

"I do and I really hope you will never lie to me again, Lilith. We will spent the rest of our lives together and I really don't want to hate you." He gave her friendly grin to ease her worries a bit.

"But why?" Was all she got out before she interrupted when Alex gave her a short and chaste kiss.

As he drew away from her again he softly answered. "Because just like you I could have done a lot worse and I really do like you. It isn't love, not yet, not so soon. But after some time we will learn to love each other, that I am sure of."

She was at loss for what to say, but ended up saying something she would have rather not said out loud. "Not the most romantic thing to say to a girl in such a situation you know..." She pouted a bit as she said that.

He laughed when he heard that. "Oh well if you like you can still switch to Victor, maybe he is more of a romanticist." The amusement in his voice lightened up Liliths mood considerably.

"I would doubt that, all that is flying around in his head is a Snitch in a large open field, quite remarkable how he can talk coherently with that much free space between his ears. And despite that I believe he has already has someone else in mind." She said in between laughs. Her mood had greatly improved to get her to joke with Alex now, she felt better, more at ease with him, knowing that he was content with their betrothal. But she knew he would still give their parents hell for doing this behind his back.

"Oh well Victor has his moments, believe me. But I really think we should return to the party before people start gossiping again." He helped her up from the bench and offered her his arm before they both returned to the ball to enjoy the rest of the night, hopefully without further surprises.

The next day started late for Alex. He was awake for the better part of the previous night and wasn't willing to get up after at least some hours of rest. But he knew there was something he had to do today. Things he had to talk to his parents about. Lilith and her parents

would join them for dinner this day, so he had to talk to his parents before their guests would arrive. Selene and Conrad were anxious about talking to their son, though he seemed to accept his betrothal he never even looked at them for the rest of the ball the day before. The conversation that was inevitable now would not be pretty if their son was half as furious with them as he had seemed the day before.

And now the moment had come, Alex and his parents sat in his fathers study, an unreadable atmosphere lingering in the room. Alex face was impassive, his gaze cold, something that troubled Selene the most, having her son hate her would break her heart.

"So you two found it prudent to make one of the most life changing decisions for a person for me, without even once asking for my opinion. Why? Tell me. Didn't you value my opinion on the matter?" Alex voice was as cold as his gaze, but he suppressed his anger well enough to keep it hidden.

"We had our reasons son. It was not meant to be disrespectful towards you. We did what we believed to be best for this situation, but we didn't tell you beforehand because we knew you would oppose simply because you would feel to young for such a decision." Conrad spoke evenly, looking at his son intently.

"So you disregarded my own opinion on such a topic, you did it because you believed you knew better what is good for me... quite a way to show your trust in your own child."

"You know that soon all important pure blood families would have started offering their daughters to you. Only a few more years and the real madness would have started. We wanted to spare you from this insanity and stop it before some of the families would be at each others throats about this. It was for you and for the better of our countries." Conrad, ever the politician tried to argue factual with his son.

"I can see your point. You have your reasons for your decision. But still I would have also been receptive to your arguments before you acted behind my back. I have already talked with Lilith and we agreed to accept the betrothal. "At this both his parents seemed to ease up a bit. Breaking of the betrothal only a day after it was publicly announced would have been horrid for their families reputations. "But... I am no longer sure whether I can trust any of

you. How can I know you won't act behind my back again. You are my family, my parents. You should care about how I feel but you disregarded that little fact all too easily. To trust you again won't be easy." His words had their intended stinging effect on his parents. He didn't like the pained expression on his mother's face, but somehow they deserved it in his opinion and he needed them to agree to his next demand. He hoped they would be more willing to agree if they believed it to be a way to regain their son's trust.

"Don't say such a thing Alex, you know your mother and I love you and would do anything for you. This might have been a shock to you, but don't toss your family aside because of this, please. If there is any way to prove this tell me. I will do whatever I can to prove you that you can always trust us." Conrad looked at his son with a solemn expression, waiting for a reply from the young wizard.

Alex sighed deeply. Now or never, either his parents would approve his next demand or else he would have to continue this charade, something that would hurt him as much as his parents. "Fine. There is one thing I need you to do. One thing I want from both of you. You will listen to what I have to say, you will not interrupt me and then you will decide whether or not you are willing to do it." Conrad and Selene watched their son attentively. "I want you to adopt Elena to our family." To say his parents' facial expression after that was comical would have been a gross understatement. Their perplexed faces were a hilarious sight for Alex.

Yeah I know. Many people out there are not satisfied with the pairing. But believe me I have good reasons for choosing Lilith instead of Elena. I wanted Alex to have a girl by his side that would not bow to his every orders. Lilith is proud and stubborn, she will not bow to Alex wishes if they seem unreasonable to her. Elena, though she is strong in her own regard, even stronger than Lilith when it comes to fighting. But she is bound to Alex by her oath to serve him and that makes her weak in some ways. Lilith will be different from that, I have planned her that way from the very beginning. Even her name is sort of a statement that she will not be subdued by her future husband.

I will have Elena fill another role that is emotionally really close to Alex, the role of his sister. Having her as his sibling will bring great benefits for the future story. At one point I had pondered to have her as Alex concubine or something like that, but I wanted Alex to be a

more classical role model and gave Elena a more dignified role. As his sister she will also have an impact on Alex followers, sure having a girl of non human background as wife would have shown how much he values her despite her not being human, but having her as his sister is an even greater statement about how he sees her as an equal.

And now I have also given a name to Alex agenda and his group of followers. I hope the names are not too ... sappy. The Crimson Covenant will play an important role in the future with the Unity Theses as their motivation. I wanted the group to have a better reason and explanation then the Blood Purity stuff from the Death Eaters that can be summed up as impure = dead. The exact contents of the Unity Theses and the way Alex own morals have influenced his grandfathers suggestions will be disclosed in future chapters. I don't feel like writing down a political manifest or something, but I will spread the Theses throughout the story.

So much for now, please keep on writing many Reviews I really appreciate them.

Chapter 14: Dominion

The next weeks passed much slower than Alex had wanted. His betrothal to the German Minister's daughter caused quite a ruckus in the wizarding world, more yet when Alexander's 'Unity Theses' were made public. Not only was Alexander once more targeted by accusations of being a dark lord in the making, now also his family's home country was in question what path they would take. They had sided with the old Grindelwald before and many people had no doubt they would do the same with his grandson as well. But no one dared acting against or openly accusing the country openly as Germany was supported by other influential countries such as Russia and Italy. To many people's surprise Britain made the first step to ease the tensions. Alex was sure this was not because of Dumbledore but more a decision made by the current Minister Cornelius Fudge who did anything humanly possible to avert war, about the only commendable thing the man did in his entire career. But still the political debate in the International Confederation of Wizards grew more heated with every passing day.

The general public in most countries looked at the Theses with suspicion. Most people, especially the older pure blood families, agreed with most of the contents. But the idea about the equality of non-human races was a topic Alex would have to spend a lot of time convincing the people of. But his point was emphasized the moment another personal change in the Grindelwald family was announced. The adoption of the Veela Elena Dupont into the Grindelwald family. By making her his kin in all but blood he showed people that he believed in the Theses himself, that he believed in all the contents. With the legal adoption the girl became almost his equal within the family, a convincing point for most people. The Grindelwald name still held its great influence and if they wouldn't look down on non-humans, many people would adjust their view of them as well. But what they didn't know was that Elena's adoption had very personal reasons, reasons that neither Alex nor Elena would ever share with any other person, not even their now mutual parents.

Being accepted into the family was odd for Elena at first. She was shocked when Alex offered this to her, she was unsure what to do, what to think about it. When she asked Alex why he was offering this he simply answered, 'because you deserve a real family and not the life of a servant'. He was quite happy when she accepted, most of their friends were happy for her and Alex's mother Selene was more

then eager to adopt Elena. She had always wanted a daughter and for years Elena had been something like that for her, though Elena seemed too detached from the majority of the family to form any attachments. But now Selene would change that and soon she started doting on the girl what made Elena a bit uncomfortable as she had seemingly never experienced something like this before. Conrad remained the way he was before, not that he disliked Elena, but he somehow couldn't bring himself to care for the young Veela the same way he did care for his son.

For Alex and Lilith their relationship became awkward after their betrothal. Both didn't really know what to make of their more or less forced relationship. Lilith spent many days of the summer at Alex home, both trying to get better acquainted. The more time Lilith spent around Alex the more of her questions about the enigma Alexander Grindelwald disappeared. But at the same time new questions came up.

Having her around most of the time Alex also let Lilith join some of the meetings with his friends. At first Lilith was shocked when they revealed the Unity Theses to her, but the more she heard them argue about what to do, the more she understood that some things were chosen out of necessity rather than malice or other dark reasons. She knew they would never discuss their real plans with her around as long as they didn't know whom she was really loyal to, but at least she could understand better what would happen during their next school year and in the future.

During that time Alex also gave Lilith a bracelet made of the same metal the bracers and bracelets of the Covenant members were made of. The blood gem on it shining brightly as he explained to her what the metal could be used for. When he explained the part about his followers swearing an oath when they received this, a blood oath no less, Lilith refused to take it. She remained calm when she told him that she was bound to him by another contract already and that she wouldn't do an oath on top of that. In the end she received her bracelet, no oath made, but still by using Liliths blood to bind the blood gem on the bracelet to her alone. The use of a non magical weapon intrigued her, though Alex emphasized his point that it would be better not to rely solely on such skills as they would be better suited as a surprise during a real fight, the very reason why he had avoided using his sword ever since the day he beheaded Pajari with it.

Finally the next school year at Durmstrang came, a year that would bring a lot of changes, that much was sure for Alex and his friends. During the time on the ship he was approached by quite a number of students, asking questions about the 'Unity Theses', people that had ignored him before came to sate their curiosity about the two words that had caused such a stir in their world.

It did not get any better once they had reached Durmstrang. Alex and his group of friends were the center of most attention, even or better said especially the attention of the teachers. Even Karkaroff made comments on Alex agenda in his opening speech, but unsurprising the High Master only said positive things about the Unity Theses. "His ass must be really in trouble when he supports this, even though some of the contents are completely against his own believes." Alex murmured, much to the amusements of his friends. But Alex also knew that he would need to talk to Karkaroff as soon as possible, preferably the very next morning.

As he had planed Alex was sitting in Karkaroffs office the next morning after his daily routine. The secretary made no move to stop him from entering, she had done that once and the trouble she got from Karkaroff for that still stopped her from even looking at Alex in any way. Alex didn't know what the High Master had done to her, he resolved he didn't want to know or else he would do things to Karkaroff that would loose him the High Master before he had outlived his usefulness. Alex had liked Karkaroff less with every new nuance of his character he learned about. The man had his uses, but finally he would be disposed of accordingly to his misgivings, a day Alex was already awaiting impatiently.

And again the man did something that Alex disliked greatly. He was tardy. After some waiting the man had finally arrived, apparently his secretary had informed him about his guest, he looked grumpy, most likely he would have preferred to sleep longer, not that Alex cared about that, 7 AM was perfectly alright to start a business day.

"What do you want, Grindelwald? I hope this is important, I can hardly imagine you have anything to say that couldn't wait another hour or two." He tried to get control of his anger, attacking the Grindelwald heir because of something as petty as this would be his undoing.

"Keep your temper in check, High Master. There are things we need to discuss, things that must be done as soon as possible." Alex watched the man closely, frowning at the sight of the angry High Master.

"You are talking about your little group of followers and that petty manifest you have published? You are nothing more than a small boy who wants to play politics, who wants to be a Dark Lord, although he knows that his powers are limited. I thought I had trained you better than that." Karkaroff shook his head, mimicking an disappointed expression, but failing at it due to his constant frowning.

"Dark Lord? Are you kidding me?" Alex laughed, causing Karkaroff to glare even more. "I have no intention to become anything even remotely connected to a dark lord. Unlike the worthless fool you once worshiped I actually have a true goal in all this. I and all my followers believe in the contents of the Unity Theses. You would be well advised not to ridicule any of it or else you might not like the consequences."

"Ah yes. Your wonderful Covenant. You are all naught but mere children playing adults, Grindelwald. What you did this summer was dumb, it caused nothing but problems and now you want to continue this here. I won't let you ruin my school with this shit!"

"Careful, Igor. You underestimate what you are dealing with here. Things are going to change in this school, this year will mark a new beginning. You either accept it and support us or I will have you replaced." Alex's voice was serious, his gaze sharp as he scrutinized Karkaroff.

"You threaten me? In my office, in my own god damn school? You are the one who needs me, as long as you are here you need me for your training. Despite that you and your family have no influence on this school and its personal. Your threats are empty." Karkaroff nearly screamed at Alex, but it was obvious that he tried to reassure himself while Alex chuckled darkly.

"You have no idea, Igor. You are expendable. I have enough contacts to have you out of office and put in Azkaban before the sun sets today. Are you really sure you want to risk it? You still have your uses, don't force my hand." 'Prematurely' he added in thought as he saw the High Master look at him with disgust and even a bit of

fear. Karkaroff growled deeply, seething in anger. But he did not say anything, he wisely kept his temper better in check than before. That moment Alex knew that he had the man, Karkaroff would no longer be in any position to interfere with his plans. "We will reform this school to fit with the new duties required from it."

"New duties?" Karkaroff was hard pressed to get even these words out without too much bile in his voice.

"Yes of course, Igor. This school will openly live the Unity Theses and act as base for the Crimson Covenant. Here we will teach children our ideals and raise the numbers of Covenant members. First act into that direction is that we will openly state that from this point forth Durmstrang will allow students from non human origins. Let them all come here, well all but muggleborn students. Muggle lovers like Dumbledore can have them for all I care."

"No." Karkaroff's statement was short but his serious tone left no doubt that he would fight such a decision.

"No? Igor I believe you still have the misconception that you are in charge here. Of course we won't let just anyone roam these noble halls. We will let them all apply and only let those come to this school that we believe to be a sufficient addition to our cause. The rest will be divided upon the smaller schools." Alex stated calmly, a smug grin on his face as he saw the scowl on Karkaroff's face widen.

"I will not let you desecrate this school with any more monsters. It was already an mistake to allow one of these animals to attend here, a mistake I will not repeat." Karkaroff nearly shouted at Alex, but the smug grin remained on the young Grindelwald's face.

"Fine Igor, have it your way. I hope they give you a nice cell in Azkaban. Scrap that I hope you rot in there. I won't tolerate such words being said about my sister." Alex made motions to stand up, seeing the startled face of Karkaroff after he mentioned Azkaban.

"Wait... fine." Through clenched teeth he admitted his defeat. Karkaroff was no idiot. Staying here and following the boy for a while was better than going back to Azkaban. This way he still had a chance for his own schemes to regain control.

"I knew you would come to your senses. Now let us talk about the how we get rid of those annoying factions that remain in this school." A malicious grin spread on Alex face, this morning he had taken control of the school from the High Master. Now he had to win over the rest of the students and get rid of his opposition.

The atmosphere during breakfast that morning was tense, much more then usual. It was plain obvious to everyone that something had happened between Karkaroff and the Grindelwald heir. Where Karkaroff had talked commendatory about Alex the day before he now glared at the boy as if he wanted him to start burning on the spot. Alex thought only grinned in response.

"Just what did you do to him?" Elena was quite curious what brought the sudden changes, everyone around them stopped talking and watched Alex attentively. Especially Lilith leaned closer so she wouldn't miss a single word.

"Lets just say I have rectified some misconceptions about who holds the power in this school." Many around him chuckled as they heard that. Karkaroff wasn't very popular among the students and the thought of him being shown his place was amusing to everyone. "From now on this school is under the control of the Covenant. The other factions will bow before us or they will have to face the consequences. Their current leaders will be expelled before the day is out shouldn't they comply. As for the rest of their minions... should they try to get cocky you can put them down, don't worry about the consequences as long as you don't do anything permanent to them."

"I won't even ask how you made a man like Karkaroff follow your orders." Lilith simply shook her head in disbelieve. During the summer she had learned about some of the influence Alex and his family hold in many countries, but that his powers even extent to this school and its high master was beyond expectation.

"Oh dear Lilith, believe me when I tell you that I did nothing unreasonable. Igor is a problem, he will be taken care of as it is befitting for a criminal like him. But for now he is more useful where he is. I simply made it clear that his safety is in my hands. I keep him out of prison and in return this school is mine." Lilith still looked unconvinced at this, but said nothing. Instead she looked at the seething High Master, who still refused to do anything else but glaring at Alexander. Seeing her attention being diverted from him

Alex placed a hand on her chin and softly pushed her face so she would look into his eyes. Their faces only inches apart. "Believe me Lilith I am not the bad man here. All I do had a reason and you know it." Lilith blushed at the contact and the closeness of his face as he talked to her, most others around them looked surprised at this display. Their betrothal was commonly known, but no one knew what they really thought about each other, their betrothal was after all an arrangement made by their parents.

He then turned around to face his sister. "Oh and Elena, our private training with Igor is over. There is little we can learn from him now. We train on our own during these hours and simply participate with other during the exams." Elena nodded at that, somewhat relieved that she would no longer have to endure the lessons with Karkaroff. As beneficial as they were the constant sneers and remarks from the man were getting annoying after a while. "There isn't much more that man can teach us these days and in this capacity he is much more useful."

The following days at school were marked by one big event, after confronting the leaders of the remaining factions there had been seven students that got expelled from Durmstrang on trumped charges. A sign to anyone that the power within the school was now firmly in the hands of the Crimson Covenant. Alex had meetings with Karkaroff every other day, discussing changes that had to be done to the school, the curriculum and other things. Slowly the school would transform according to the wishes from the Grindelwald heir.

Weeks passed quickly by, the lessons becoming awfully boring for Alex, since most of the third year curriculum was theory that he had learned in the time before his magical training with wand had begun. Just like the first two years the school's education would pose little problems for the heir of Gellert Grindelwald. As Alex walked into one of the common rooms of his dorm building he found it nearly empty, it was after all already late night. His latest meeting with Karkaroff brought the final end of any opposing factions in Durmstrang. All factions, except the Covenant, had been banned now. Students that would act against this rule would find themselves quickly expelled from the prestigious school. It was merely a safety measure for the future, all other factions were gone by now. One faction had already been dissolved after Alex's first year, but unlike with that faction Alex had no intention on killing any more kids to destroy the remaining opposition. He simply used Karkaroff for his dirty work.

On a couch near an open fireplace sat Benedikt, reading a newspaper, an English newspaper to Alex surprise. "Didn't know you are so interested in the Brits little bedtime stories. Almost everything in there is embellished or outright phony."

Benedikt laughed at that. "Yeah I know. It is good for the entertainment and a nice way to keep my English from getting rusty. Got this newspaper from one of the first years, apparently some of them are from the island. Dumbledore is losing support even from his own countrymen."

"I hope you haven't scared the poor child too much when you have taken it from him." Both chuckled at the thought of Benedikt scaring little children. The Russian was a little child himself, at least in his mannerisms most of the time.

"Nah he gave it to me, is a few days old anyways. His parents sent it to him, don't ask me why. But there is an interesting article about Hogwarts in it." Now this got Alex attention.

"And what about the old fools school? Has it finally burned down or something?"

"Nah, unfortunately not. Apparently the sister of their so called savior has started school this year. They had hoped he would come too, that he was only abducted and raised by other people. Seems like they were quite disappointed, Harry Potter, the savior of the wizarding world is dead." Both boys chuckled at the thought of Dumbledores disappointed face once he realized that the young Potter wasn't among his new students.

"And what about his sister? I met her in London, a quite shy and timid girl."

"Just the usual. They only pay attention to her because of her brother. She was sorted into Gryffindor, as anyone would have expected." Benedikt looked back at the article to make sure he hasn't forgotten anything important.

"Yeah as if Dumbledore would have let that girl go anywhere else. Everyone knows that he has very much influence over all Gryffindor students. I really pity the poor girl. First they nearly destroy her with

their over protectiveness and now she is under the thumb of the old man." Alex shook his head at this. He had liked talking to her father, he didn't seem to be a bad person but his relationship with Albus Dumbledore made any further contact impossible. The risk of information getting into the old mans hands was to great, it wasn't worth it.

"Oh well it is not like any of this will influence us. Hogwarts is of no concern to us. We got Durmstrang under control that should do the trick." Benedikt easily dismissed the importance of the other schools in Europe, too easily.

"We might not get a chance to have an direct impact on that school but it is worth knowing what happens there, Benedikt. Information are the deadliest weapon. Most of our fiercest opponents will most likely hail from that school. If only we had a chance to influence some of the students to spread our cause there." Alex had a thoughtful look on his face. "Taking students from right under his nose, that would be the ultimate humiliation for the old man. Sadly we will not get this chance."

"Better this way if you ask me. I heard the school is in Scotland, if we wanted to do anything there we had to go up there. I heard the food is terrible in Britain... no thanks I'd rather stay here." Both boys chuckled at that, clearly amused about the thought.

It was moments later that another person joined the two teens in the room. To both Alex and Benedikts surprise it was no other but Victor Krum. "Victor, what can I do for you this fine hour?" Alex had a small smile on his face. Since neither of them resumed the lessons with Karkaroff their rivalry had effectively come to an end and Alex admitted he missed the bickering and fighting with the stoic Bulgarian.

"You and I need to talk." He looked over at Benedikt with an unreadable expression. "Alone." He emphasized the word and Benedikt actually stood up to leave, but Alex raised a hand and stopped him.

"Whatever you have to say can be said in front of Benedikt. He is privy to most of my secrets and I doubt you know any secrets that he doesn't." Alex stated this matter of factly, getting a scowl from Victor and a happy smile from Benedikt.

"Fine, let him stay." He walked over and sat down in a chair opposed to the couch Benedikt had sat on. Both Alex and Benedikt sat down on the couch, watching Victor attentively. "I am here because of you group, your Crimson Covenant."

"Ah man, did one of our members pick on you because you once belonged to one of the outlawed factions, Vicky?" Benedikt teased the Bulgarian. While Benedikt never had a rivalry with Krum like Alex had, he couldn't deny his profound dislike for the Bulgarian.

"Benedikt, behave. Tell me Victor. What is this about? What business do you have with my Covenant?" Alex interest was peaked. He remembered his grandfathers advise to try and turn Krum on his side, maybe this was the chance.

"I want in. I want to join your Covenant, but not as one of the pawns. I want a higher position." Victor stated this in a firm voice, resolve in every word.

"What the hell?" Benedikt blurted this out before his brain could really comprehend the second part of Victor's sentence. Alex though had heard it all and was equally surprised. He believed it would be hard to get someone like Victor to join him, and yet here they sat. Calmly around a fire in an empty common room and Victor Krum demanded to be part of the Crimson Covenant.

"And why do you want to join?" Alex question was more then justified, curiosity wanted to be sated here and now.

"My reasons are my own. I know you recruit in this school and I want in."

"Unfortunately that isn't a good enough reason for me, Victor. You either give me a good reasons or else this talk is over. Especially if you want to join in a higher position I expect a damn good reason."

Victor took a deep breath, apparently in an inner dispute about what to say. "Amongst other things I want to continue my schooling here in Durmstrang, I know who holds the power here. The past decision of the High Master made it plain obvious that he is your puppet."

"Indeed. Good observation, Victor. But you won't tell me you would make such an commitment like joining the Covenant just to remain in this school, do you? What else is there?"

"It is also obvious that your family holds political power in Europe, at least in most countries except Britain, France and Spain, but I couldn't care less about these countries. It would be detrimental to my career in Europe if I would be an opponent of yours."

"Another good point. Though I wouldn't take our rivalry as an reason to ruin your career. You should know by now that I don't really care about Quidditch." Alex knew this could go back and forth for hours and he really wanted to go to sleep so he wanted to end this as quickly as possible. Of course it should only end with Victor becoming one of them.

"I also have a more personal reason, but I do not wish to disclose it for the moment." At this both Alex and Benedikt looked at him suspiciously. "Don't fret it, it wouldn't interfere with any of your plans nor would it be detrimental to the Covenant."

"Right, if you say so. Still I wonder if you are realizing the consequences here."

"I know of the oath the member of your Covenant make. The blood oath made with those stones on your bracers. I am willing to do it, if in return I get the guarantee for an higher position within the Covenant. I won't be a pawn to be used and discarded."

"Yes you said that already. Fine you are willing to take the oath, that is a good thing." For a moment Alex thoughts drifted to Lilith and her refusal to take the oath. She and Elena are the only other Covenant members except him that have not taken that blood oath. Elena was bound to him by another oath, Lilith refused because of their future marriage and he himself had no need for the oath. The blood oath basically bound all members to serve him loyally. But no one in the Covenant knew of this and the three exceptions. "But I must ask you what can you contribute to us that would warrant to give you a high position?"

"Yeah that is something I would like to know as well." Benedikt just had to add his two scents, a quick glare from Alex silenced him though.

"I am famous, through Quidditch I have many fans. Can you imagine what benefits it would have for you? If I join many others will do so too just because I did it. Or at least they will be mostly positive towards your group." Victor stated this fact with a smug grin, knowing that no one could deny that fact.

"The man got a point." Alex chuckled. "Fine, Victor. If you really want to you are in. Tomorrow you will take the oath. Once that is done you will join us on some of the meetings. Maybe I let you tag along when I talk to Igor next time. Time will tell in which capacity we can use your talents." Alex stood up and walked over to Victor who was ready to leave the room. "Welcome to the Covenant Victor Krum." A firm handshake later Victor was gone from the room leaving Alex and an brooding Benedikt behind. It was strange but Alex welcomed that Benedikt kept his mouth shut at the end of the conversation.

"Do you really think this is a good idea? I don't trust him." Benedikt glared at the door where Victor had disappeared.

"We will have to watch him a bit more closely until we know his exact reason for joining us, until then I welcome the benefits of having a coming sports idol in our group. Things will get so much more interesting now."

The introduction of Victor Krum to the Crimson Covenant had just the created the reactions that Victor himself had predicted. Students who had so far remained neutral towards the Covenant, but were fans of the young Quidditch prodigy suddenly reconsidered their thoughts about the group. Some even expressed their will to join. All just because one popular figure made a decision, just like that the 'weak willed' as some would put it, made up their mind.

Alex inner circle of friends had very mixed reactions to this whole development. Benedikt was still brooding, not really liking the sudden hype around Victor Krum. His sister found her brothers reaction amusing, his little jealousy tantrum as she called it, was a steady source of laughter from her. Ivanna didn't mind the Bulgarian, she would keep an eye on him, but give him the benefit of a doubt for the moment. Lilith would do just the same, though she was much more suspicious of him. Being the daughter of a politician taught her one thing in her life, no one does such things without a damn good reason and Lilith would not stop watching him until she knew that

reason. Elena though was the most impartial. She tried to see Victor for what he could contribute to their cause, nothing more. Due to their constant training she knew the Bulgarian for some time now, she knew that it was impossible to say what is going in his head, but she knew that he wouldn't be dumb enough to try and betray them.

The rest of the first term of their third year passed by in a blur. Alex plans to change the school were progressing as planned, despite Karkaroffs futile attempts to stall some of Alex more radical changes. By the time the winter holidays started the High Master had already resigned to his fate and stopped counteracting the changes in the school. Instead he started working harder on his plans to break free from the control the young Grindelwald now had over his life. There was just no way that Igor Karkaroff would let himself be controlled by a young boy, not after he had so narrowly escaped the control of the greatest dark lord in recent history.

Spending the holidays back home was a welcome change for Alex, his life in school had been pretty hectic these last few months, not because of the things he was supposed to learn but because of his extracurricular activities. At home he could use the few weeks of peace to regenerate and plan. The only ones that would visit him during the holidays would be his friends and his fiancée, the rest of the Covenant members enjoyed their own holidays, for these few days it was just like they were all normal children.

The day after the usual mandatory ministry ball, which Alex and his parents had attended every year now, Alex sat in his own study back home, only in the company of his sister and his fiancée. Elena was reading some book, totally engrossed with it, while Lilith and Alex were talking about Liliths favorite topic, politics. Much to Alex frustration.

"You know that ball yesterday was a good way to see how much the people have excepted your Theses. As it seems you have at the very least Germany and Russia firmly supporting you and the rest... well they will follow us too when the time comes."

"Yeah, I guess so. I can't shake the feeling that this year there were so much more sycophants then all years before together. One more handshake and empty words and I swear I would have lost my cool. I just want to make a change in this world, why the hell do I have to

put up with them." Alex shook his head, scowling when he thought about some of the guests he had met the day before.

"Oh live with it. As long as there are politicians there will always be lies and deceptions." Lilith smiled when she saw his scowl, she found the evening highly amusing. Even though she didn't really like to have to cling to his arm all the time and show off as his picture perfect fiancée.

"Once we are ruling everything I will make it rule number one that anyone who tries to shake my hand gets two days in a dark cell... that should discourage them." Lilith laughed at his joke loudly, gaining Elena's attention. She looked at her brother and his fiancée with a raised eyebrow before she returned reading her book. "Oh well let's change the topic. I really liked that dress you wore yesterday. That emerald color goes greatly with your eyes you know." At this comment Lilith blushed a little and patted his arm in indignation.

The next moment Alex's father entered the study, instantly gaining the attention of all three teens in the room. He made no comment on the scene as he simply handed his son a letter with a very familiar seal, before he left them alone again. Conrad smiled contently as he left, happy that his son and the fiancée they had decided for him seemed to get along splendidly.

Alex quickly read through the contents of the letter. Elena watched him closely, she too had seen the seal and knew what this meant. Gellert Grindelwald wanted something from his heir, information, a visit, whatever he wanted it caused Alex to look thoughtful at the paper.

"Alex? What does he want?" Elena was careful not to say the name of the former dark lord, so far Lilith did not know about Alex's visits to his grandfather. None of his friends knew, only Elena, his parents and a few others that were most trusted by the family.

"He wants to meet you. Both of you." Alex looked at the shocked face of his sister and the confused face of his fiancée. "Lilith there is something you should know. A secret that you are not allowed to share with anyone, not even your parents." This did not really help with Lilith's confusion, she looked at him questioningly, waiting for him to elaborate. "You know who my grandfather is, well everyone

does. What most people don't know is that Gellert Grindelwald is still very much alive, incarcerated in his own prison Nurmengard. What even less people know is that I have already met him a few times and that he has at least some part in my plans."

Lilith needed a few moments to fully grasp the meaning of what he had just said. Gellert Grindelwald, the feared dark lord was still alive. Alive and actively taking part in Alex plans, in their plans. "And ... why does he want to meet me?"

"He wants to see the woman that will birth the next generation of Grindelwald heirs, his words not mine. And he wants to meet Elena because she now bears the Grindelwald name. Most likely to drill her not to embarrass the family or something like that." Alex took a deep breath, seeing Elena looking a bit fearful at the thought of meeting Grindelwald. It was no secret that he was not a big fan of non humans, even though he never hunted them down like other wizards do for sport. "Don't worry Elena. He approved of you as my closest friend and confidant and will accept you as my sister." He looked at Lilith then back at Elena. "You are both proud, intelligent and strong, traits that he greatly values. The fact that both of you are beautiful will also help immensely. Come we better leave now, the old man still gets cranky when you let him wait for too long."

As soon as they stood outside the impressive prison Nurmengard Alex couldn't help but chuckle at the faces his two female companions made. He wondered whether he looked the same during his first visit, he concluded that he looked even more stunned and fearful, after all he was a small child when he had to visit his grandfather for the first time.

"For the greater good?" Lilith read the inscription above the entrance, looking a bit confused. "Isn't that one of the things that Dumbledore loves to spout all day?"

"Yeah. Another thing he had stolen from my grandfather. They were friends in their childhood, Dumbles and my grandfather. Long long ago." This shocked both girls to silence, neither said a word as they ascended the stairs to the topmost cell. "I know it was a shock for me too when I first heard about it. Dumbledore was once like him, they both shared the same goals. Most shocking about it is that apparently Dumbledore was interested in more than just friendship."

Lilith made a face when she heard that before she started laughing. "That is hilarious, so you are actually telling us that Albus Dumbledore, the key figure of the light is gay and had a crush on a dark lord?"

Alex couldn't help but chuckle at the thought what this would cause should the information be made public. "It is not like I dislike homosexuals, but I am quite happy that my grandfather apparently does not share these ... preferences. Or at least that he didn't all the time, else I wouldn't be here today."

"Could we please talk about something else but the sexual preferences of Dumbledore and certain dark lords?" Elena looked annoyed, she really didn't want to talk about Grindelwald in that way when they were only moments from meeting the man.

"Fine fine, you win Elena. We have arrived anyways." They stopped in front of a large door. "Whatever you do, try not to anger him. Be cordial and respectful, but don't be submissive, I tried that once. Lets just say he doesn't like that, especially from people that he considers as part of his family."

A short knock later they entered the room, seeing the bald old wizard sitting on his chair near the window. He looked at his heir, then at the two girls walking closely behind him. "Good, this time you reacted timely to my summons. Apparently your foolish mother has finally accepted that she cannot stop these meetings."

Alex was hard pressed not reply something that would make the old man angry, he knew the jabs against his mother were a way the old Grindelwald tested his heirs self control. "Yes grandfather. I have come as you requested. I have also brought Lilith and Elena with me." He first gestured towards Lilith who stood to his left. "This is Lilith Falkenstein, my fiancée."

"Come here girl, let me see you more closely." The old wizard beckoned her with his hand to approach him, but Lilith hesitated a bit. She looked at Alex who simply nodded, before she came closer. "You fear me, young girl. Yes I can see it in your eyes."

"I don't fear you, sir. But it would be unwise to senselessly approach a man who is still known as one of the strongest dark lords in our

history." Her words came more like a reflex, a self defense as she wouldn't let anyone call her scared of bald old man.

Grindelwald simply chuckled. "She has a character to match yours, my heir, and enough brain to choose her words wisely." He then scrutinized Lilith more closely, looking her up and down, which made her feel quite embarrassed and Alex slightly angry at seeing her discomfort. "Yes she also is a real beauty, your parents have chosen wisely. She will do our family proud and will birth strong heirs for our line. I approve of her." He then made a dismissive motion with his hand and Lilith was more than glad to increase the distance to the old man.

Alex was relieved that he approved of Lilith, he didn't even want to think what the old wizard could have done to her else. Alex still remembered how he got his long scar that went down to his eyebrow. But now another issue awaited them, what would the old man have to say about Elena. "And grandfather, this is Elena, my sister." Again the old man motioned for the girl to come closer, unlike Lilith Elena did not hesitate and approached him, looking directly at him all the time.

"Hah so you do not have any quarrels to approach a dark lord, like young Lilith has. Tell me girl do you fear me?"

"Not any more then is appropriate. And to me it makes no difference if I stand here or at the other end of the room, if you had the intention to harm me the distance would be irrelevant."

At that the old wizard laughed, a sinister barking sound. "Hah, that girl got spunk. I can see pride in your eyes, tell me girl what are you proud of?"

"I am proud to have Alexander as my closest friend and that he considered me worthy of becoming his sister. The Grindelwald name meant nothing to me, I would have taken any other name for him."

"Hm, so you are loyal to my heir?" He looked pointedly at Elena, but she looked back, seemingly unfazed. But on the inside she wanted to simply get away from this man, his entire demeanor and aura simply screamed trouble at her.

"I would die for him without a second thought. Even without the oath I had sworn years ago I would do anything he asks of me." She stated this calmly, seeing a weird grin spread on Grindelwalds face.

"And why are you so willing to do so? You said it has nothing to do with that oath."

"Because he has given me the one thing I always wanted but never had. A true family, friendship and a home I can return to whenever I want or need it." The weird grin on Gellerts face widened after hearing this. Alex simply smiled at his sister, while Lilith looked curious at Elena. She didn't really know much about the Veela.

"If that is the case. You know that in your position as a non human people will watch you very closely. You carry the Grindelwald name now, do so with pride and do not bring shame upon my family. I may be bound to his place for the moment but I hold enough influence to have you disappear should you shame the Grindelwald name." His tone was fierce as he uttered his command. But still Elena remained calm on the outside.

"I understand and I swear I would rather die then bring shame upon this family." With these words she stepped back to Alex and Lilith, retaking her place to his right.

"Well then, tell me my heir, how do your plans proceed?" Now it was Alex turn to step forward. He calmly recounted all that had happened since their last meeting, the Unity Theses, the founding of the Crimson Covenant, everything. From time to time the old wizard asked question when Alex was too vague on some points, but in the end the old Grindelwald looked satisfied with the report.

"You did well. The political tension were to be expected, but they will subside given enough time. Use this time to strengthen your power basis. You made the right choice with Karkaroff. The fool still has some uses, but not if he impairs your progress in taking over the school."

"Aye, his training was valuable in the past, but I have come to the conclusion that it was time to restrict his position. He is so afraid of Azkaban that we can easily bring the entire school under our control. The necessary changes are already under way and before the year

is out every student will be under our rule or else they will leave the school permanently."

"Good. The school is hidden from everyone, even other wizards. Using it as training ground for your Covenant is a wise choice. But do not underestimate Karkaroff. He is a fool but he has found a way to escape his seemingly inevitable fate in the past. Keep an eye on him and dispose of him if he shows more signs of betrayal."

"Yes grandfather. Now Durmstrang will be under our control, it will be our dominion." Little else was said before the three teens left the former dark lord alone, all of them happy that this meeting was over. Grindelwald was pleased with his heir. The decision to steal the Potter boy so many years ago had paid off ten fold already. Only a few more years and he could leave this place again and with his heir as public face he would reign from the shadows. Yes all the plans of Gellert Grindelwald have finally started to yield the expected results.

AN: Yeah another strange chapter with some unexpected developments, I know. At first Alex talk with Karkaroff had been much more hostile, but after reading it again I changed it to make Alex take a more calculating role. In canon there were two things that Karkaroff seemed to fear more than death, one being his former master and the other being sent back to Azkaban. I just used that fear of the prison here as possible black mail against Igor.

Then Victor's sudden decision to join the Covenant, again something that many people would not have expected, I really wanted him to be part of it and this way, by making it look like he joins on his own conditions I tried to stick to the way I have portrayed him so far. Don't know if it worked, that is up for the readers to decide.

Also this was the last chapter before the time skip, the next chapter will be several years later, the story will resume at the beginning of Alex sixth year. Some have already expected it, the year of the Triwizard Tournament. From there on the story will also have a little more action when Covenant and Dumbledores followers clash during the tournament.

And just as a reminder, while I have Lilith laugh about Albus sexual preferences here it is just for story reasons, the wizarding world is so biased and close minded that I expect it to frown upon such things. It is not my own opinion so don't flame me for it.

This also means the introduction of some new characters, obviously from there on Rose Potter will get more important, but also two other Ocs, Antares and Cassiopeia Black, Sirius own children. These three will have some importance during the future part of the story, additional to the current characters. Other canon students like Draco and his buddies will also play their respective roles of course. And there will also be some other named side characters from Durmstrang, but they won't really get their own stories, they will just be supportive characters for Alex and his friends. I really try to keep the number of Ocs low, but a story as AU as this has the need for its own characters.

So much for now, please leave a Review.

Chapter 15: Tournaments

3 years later...

In the year 1994 the political tensions in Europe finally subsided, for almost three years many people had predicted that a war could start any day. Alexanders 'Unity Theses' and the subsequent support from some European countries had caused an uproar, many calling for the incarceration of the Grindelwald heir, before he could rise as a dark lord. Others wanted to place him under strict observation to ensure the boys correct upbringing, one of those people was of course Albus Dumbledore. Though his attempts to influence the boy had lessened with each year, he still openly talked about the necessity to keep the heir of Gellert Grindelwald from going dark. But Alex had the support from several ministries, especially that of his current home country.

For some time this caused chaos in the International Confederation of Wizards, supporters and opposition openly attacking each other without much restraint. Neither side would budge and everyone had his eyes on Alexander Grindelwald. In the end those who opposed him and wanted to bring him down had to resign. Long negotiations between the two leading countries in this conflict, Britain for those against Grindelwald and Germany as his supporters, could ease the tensions. The British Minister Cornelius Fudge did his utmost to appease both sides, fearing the war that could once again destroy their countries, so very few years after the war against Voldemort had ended. Fudges policy would forever be remembered as the only good thing that the otherwise corrupt man had done in his entire career.

What helped to diffuse the situation was also the actions of Grindelwald himself, due to his influence the magical school Durmstrang now had dropped its bias against non human children. The general change in the schools behavior and Alexanders cooperation with the magical races were among the things that even his opponents could no deny to be all but the actions if a dark lord in the making.

Durmstrang itself had changed a lot. By using his political influence and Kakaroffs fear of being imprisoned for his past, Alex had managed to enforce his plans within the school. The High Master could do little against it, much to his chagrin. Kakaroff hated to see

the number of non magical students at his school rise with every passing year. But the decision who could attend the school and who would not be allowed was no longer in his hands. By using his families political influence Alex had managed to assign this duty to an outside group that would also watch the schools policies and faculty. Needless to say that every member of this group was handpicked by the Grindelwald family. All went well for Alexander Grindelwald until the summer before his sixth year at Durmstrang.

Alex fell onto the couch in the living room of his parents mansion, exhausted from his latest visit to a vampire clan that had expressed their interest to join him in his endeavors. Almost the entire summer he had spent talking and negotiating with different magical races about their stance towards his plans. Most had by now started sending some of their children to Durmstrang, knowing full well that this meant that those children would join the Covenant there. Only the Vampires were really hesitant, most clans wished to remain neutral and secluded and even those who did talk to Alex had no intention to send any of their youngest to the magical school.

Alex presence did not remain unknown for long and he was soon joined by his fiancée, who regarded him curiously. "I did not expect you back so soon, how did it go with those Vampires?" Lilith sat down next to him on the couch, leaning slightly against him. They had both gotten closer in the past years, mostly due to the fact that their families had decided that Lilith would live with her futures husbands family to get better acquainted with Alex. They both still wouldn't talk of love, to them it was a mutual understanding, a partnership that they both could profit from.

"Don't ask. Adrienne is crazy I tell you. Tried to bite me more then once..." He sighed, clearly happy that it remained at just 'tried'. "But we did come to an agreement."

"So will they join us?" Lilith was curious, it took a lot of time on her part to convince Alex and his friend to let her in on their plans. They didn't trust her, future wife or not her loyalties were unknown in the beginning. It didn't help that she refused to swear the same oath as all other members that had joined the Covenant. After a year of sharing Alex life they had finally started to trust her and Alex even came to her for advice. Since Lilith often gave Alex a piece of her mind, she proved to be a valuable addition to the inner circle of the Crimson Covenant.

"Yes but Adrienne had a condition. She wants me to find her a person befitting to become her child and heir... crazy woman wants me to condemn someone to become a vampire under her command."

"Ouch... anyone in particular that you have chosen for that 'duty'?"

"I have no one at the moment that would meet the criteria. Adrienne wants a female heir and I am not willing to sacrifice any of the women in my life to that vampire. But all in due time, there is no time limit to this task, Adrienne has time and we don't need her clan at the moment. Maybe I will find someone to do it or maybe not."

"Good... so what are our plans for the rest of the day now that you are back so much earlier then we had anticipated?" Lilith rested her head on his shoulder, looking slightly upward, only seeing the corners of his lips curl upward in a smile.

"I really don't know. Where is everybody else at the moment?"

"Conrad is at work and your mother has dragged Elena to shopping. I only escaped that because I took a shower at that time... it is really funny to see the troubled look on Elenas face whenever your mother has plans for her." Lilith laughed softly at the way Elena reacted to Selene. Ever since the Grindelwalds had adopted Elena, Selene had started to dote on the girl and Elena was often overwhelmed by Selenes display of motherly support for her. A daughter was just the thing Selene had wished for the most. Now she had two children to care for, something the sweet-tempered daughter of Gellert Grindelwald enjoyed greatly.

"Well Benedikt and Ivanna are visiting relatives for some time... hm so its only you and me for the moment, unless you want me to call over some of the other guys from the Covenant?" He looked at her seeing her softly shake her head at that thought. "Oh well then its just us. Anything you wish to do, Lilith?"

"Lets just stay here and relax, things will get hectic soon enough. I really want to stay here for the moment..." She smiled contently and Alex was more then willing to stay here with her for now. His last trip had exhausted him and Lilith was right. This rare moment of peace should be savored as long as it lasts. At the latest things will get

troublesome as soon as they return to Durmstrang, Kakaroff had already informed him of what would await them this year and Alex was not looking forward to it. He already cursed himself for allowing Karkaroff enough freedom to agree to joining that blasted event.

In a show of good faith Fudge had invited the Grindelwalds and some other influential people to visit the Quidditch world cup that would be held in England this year. The man truly had no bad intentions, but Alex still remained cautious, visiting this country so soon after the political uproar could end really bad for him. But to decline the invitation of the man that had resolved the conflict would be just as bad politically. Alex hated such situations where he had to take stupid risks for the sake of keeping up his reputation and political contacts. In the end he decided to follow the invitation, but he wouldn't go alone, after discussions with his family and inner circle they had decided that twenty members of the Covenant would come along as well. Alex would try to minimize the risks for himself and his family and anyone who would try anything against him would have to pay a high prize.

Another reason for why he decided to visit the world cup was the fact that Victor Krum would play in the finals, somehow his mediocre team had managed to come this far in the tournament, most likely all thanks to Victor's work as seeker. Alex and Victor had a strange sort of respect for each other, especially after Victor had joined the Covenant at his own free will. Just as Victor had predicted there had been a rise in new recruits ever since he became famous, one idol could really influence a great many people as it seems. From time to time Alex also relied on Victor's advice, he knew what the older boy was capable of and would place him in a position where his talents would bring the greatest benefits for the Covenant.

In late August they departed for the World Cup. Alex with his friends, twenty of his stronger and most trusted followers and his mother. Conrad wanted to come as representative for his country but was detained by political problems, so Selene would be the only adult to accompany the group of twenty five adolescents. To provide the necessary space and privacy they had booked a large space at the border of the camping site. A place easy to defend and escape from in case things went awry.

"Ah Mrs Grindelwald, always a pleasure to meet you. I can't say how delighted I was when you consented to come." Minister Fudge

shook Selene's hand rather enthusiastically, a friendly expression on his face. His good relationship with the Grindelwald family and his work towards a peaceful coexistence had gained him much popularity these days and all Fudge really wanted was fame, to be known as a great minister long past his years.

"My family was honored by your invitation, Minister. I am really sorry that my husband couldn't come, but sometime politics wait for no one, I am sure you understand." Selene tried to smile pleasantly, but it was kind of a forced smile. To her Fudge was a bit obnoxious. His self importance had not changed for the better with the recent political events. But for appearances sake she would play her part, just as it was expected from a politician's wife.

"Ah pity, I would have loved to hear his opinion on some of my plans for a number of bills I wish to introduce during the next meeting of the ICW. But where is your son? I hope he could come at least." Fudge looked around, seeing only the two Covenant members Alex had sent as protection for his mother, both looking impassively under the hoods of their crimson robes.

"My son and his friends are currently down by the changing rooms of the players, one of their friends plays for Bulgaria and they wanted to wish him luck in person. My children and their friends will join us here afterward, I am sure they won't take long." Fudge seemed satisfied with this explanation, he had really hoped that they could have a photo of him shaking the young Grindelwald's hand in friendship on the front page of the Daily Prophet with a catching headline or something.

Alex was in a secluded room next to the Bulgarian locker room, there were some things he wanted to find out about his inscrutable acquaintance.

"Please make it quick, Master Grindelwald. We need Victor in a few minutes to go over our tactic one last time." The Bulgarian trainer looked apologetic at Alexander, it was obvious that he was just another of the countless sycophants that Alex had to deal with so far in his life. Alex simply waved him off, not saying anything until the man had left the room.

"I am truly surprised that you guys have come so far, Victor." The seeker merely grunted to that. "But you are here, one of the worst

teams in the competition with the best seeker in the competition. Well lets see if your luck holds tonight as well."

"Victory will be hard, but I couldn't care less for it. All I need to do is catch the snitch, the rest means nothing here. If I catch it every team in Europa will pay a fortune to have me playing for them."

"So you are in for the money? I thought you had different reasons, you know. Something with a deeper meaning." Victor just looked at him blankly. "Oh well just like I will probably never know, just like I will never understand why you joined me."

"I had my reasons. It is better to choose a side before you are forced to do so. It could have effected my career in some countries if I hadn't done it." By now Victor had started pacing around the room.

"So you felt forced to join me? Believe me Victor I don't force you to anything. You have your uses I admit, but I would rather do without you instead of having an unwilling follower who might spread dissent within our group. You know for our plans unity amongst us is imperative."

"Forced is the wrong word, obliged fits better. I felt obliged, for my career and other reasons." He trailed off at the end, still restlessly pacing in the room.

"Other reasons huh? Oh well. Catch that snitch tonight. I have to get going, I guess there is a politician waiting for me and I don't expect my mother to put up with him for too long." Alex went to leave but stopped before he reached the door. "Oh and Victor.." The seekers head snapped around looking at the other boy. "As incentive to do your best... should you catch that snitch in under thirty minutes I will arrange a date for you with my sister." Seeing the dumbfounded look on Victor's face made Alex chuckle in amusement before he left not waiting for an answer. He suspected Victor had a thing for his sister, she was one of the few within the Covenant that Victor socialized with of his own volition. Well now he would see if his guess was right or not.

Outside the room stood Elena and Benedikt, Ivanna and the others were waiting outside the building, something about the stench of the locker room being insufferable. As Alex saw his sister a huge smirk appeared on his face.

"Why are you smirking like that, Alex? Something happened while you talked to Victor?" Elena watched her brother curiously, not really understanding what caused his good mood.

"I tell you when it happens, Elena. Come one guys lets get to that private box the minister has reserved for us." Elena looked confused as she followed Alex out to find the way up to the box where Selene and the minister would be waiting for them.

On their way up to the box Alex witnessed a rather loud dispute between a family of red heads and a blond man and what appeared to be his son. Alex could only shake his head at such unrestrained behavior in such a public setting. Before he continued climbing up the steps he saw two other men break up the fight before it became violent, one of these man Alex could obviously identify as James Potter. The man had not really changed a bit in the years since Alex had last seen him. James watched Alex and his group of crimson robed followers climb the stairs to the topmost box with great interest. As an auror he had the ministers well being in mind, but apparently Fudge had invited them to come. James didn't know what to think about the Grindelwald boy, during the time they had talked he seemed friendly and likeable, but only a few months later he causes a political incident that almost turned into a full out war. But for tonight he would not think about all this. He was here with his friends and family to enjoy the game, not to think about his job while he is off duty.

The match was just as boring as Alex had expected, he never had been a fan of this sport. While most young boys grow up with toy brooms to play quidditch from a young age, Alex had spent his time training. He never really started liking this particular sport this way, the first time that he was really faced with it was when he first met Victor Krum. But to add to the boredom Alex was also utterly annoyed. He had to sit next to Fudge the entire time and the man couldn't shut up for more than ten seconds. It took most of Alex discipline to not snap at the man and keep up appearances. At least the match was short. After twenty four minutes Victor had caught the snitch, but Bulgaria had lost none the less, due to the none existing skill of his fellow players on the Bulgarian team. When Alex saw the time it had taken he smirked as he looked over to Elena who sat two seats away from him.

"I guess you will get a chance to privately congratulate Victor, Elena." He chuckled when he saw her questioning look.

"Care to elaborate? I am not sure what you mean, especially why should I congratulate Victor? They lost the game, Alex."

"I'll explain later." He winked roguish at his adopted sister until he was smacked on the back of his head by Lilith, who sat between the two Grindelwald siblings.

"I hope for you that you haven't done what I think you have... you will have a lot to explain once we get home." She looked annoyed at her fiancée, but it did not diminish his smirk one bit.

"Ah dearest Lilith you wound me that you believe me capable of anything bad when my sister is involved." She still glared at him, but only for good measure. It was undoubted that Alex would rather die than let any harm befall his family... the family that she would belong to in less than two years.

Minister Fudge who sat on Alex other side did not really understand a word that they had spoken, every time they didn't want Fudge to catch on to what they were talking about they talked either German or Russian, full knowing that the Minister only understood English. But still Fudge smiled slightly at the group, murmuring something about 'young love' and how he missed his own youth.

Alex and his group excused themselves soon thereafter and left for their camp spot before the masses would start leaving the stadium. Alex mother though decided to stay behind and talk to the minister and some other politicians that present at the moment, some more, only accompanied by the two Covenant members Alex had tasked with guarding her.

The rest of the evening was marked by loud singing and other revelries, people celebrating the Irish victory happily and with exuberant consummation of different alcoholic beverages. Alex watched the ongoing party from the borders of their small camp, not really wanting to drink or celebrate. Some of his followers had been out to join the party, but none stayed away for too long, some even disgusted with how wild the party went at some points.

"What goes through your mind, Alex?" Lilith approached him with a somewhat worried look.

"Seeing this makes me wonder... what kind of culture are we trying to defend. This drunken... whatever is disgusting."

"Let the rabble have their fun, it is not like all of Europe is like that. The wizards here are different from us, we are not used to their behavior." She stopped at his side looking the same direction as he does, trying to find out what he was focused on. "But maybe part of our plans should also be to civilize some parts of our culture. Either that or we wait and see what the rest of wizarding Britain is like. Back when we were in London for the tournament we visited that place... what was its name... ah yes Diagon Alley. It seemed much more civilized then this place here. These people are just a bunch of sad drunks. Just wait until the sun rises and they all will start acting normal again." She looked over to him, seeing him eye her curiously.

"Guess your are right. Now what shall we do with the rest of the night? I don't want to stay here watching those people all the time."

"Hm... how about you finally tell me what you meant when you talked to Elena earlier." She saw him look sheepishly once more, rubbing the back of his neck.

"Oh you see, I tried to figure out something about Victor... why he had joined us. I had a suspicion and made a bet with Victor to... get proof for my theory..." He needn't say more, Lilith could easily catch on to what he meant.

"Aha, so you believe he is after your sister? And you made a bet concerning her?" She asked sweetly and Alex simply nodded. Suddenly Lilith smacked Alex again on the back of his head. "Are you out of your mind?"

Alex didn't get a chance to answer that as screams and some explosions on the other side of the camp got their attention. One of Alex followers came running to him, clearly out of breath. "Master Grindelwald. Those Brits are crazy, they started fighting near the tents of the irish fans. You can see the fire from all the way here."

"You've gotta be kidding me..." Alex sighed annoyed. "Arvid make sure that all of our group are back here. I want all those who went

out partying to return within the next twenty minutes. Tell the others to prepare for our departure." The young man nodded before he hurried away to fulfill his orders. "Come Lilith let's find my mother and the others. I don't want to spend more time in this blasted country than necessary." They hurried towards the growing group of crimson robed people, some already approaching them.

"Alex, Lilith. What the hell is going on here. Is too much to ask for an hour or two in silence when I spent time with Rebecca?" Benedict looked rather disheveled as he came closer, anger and confusion mixed on his face.

"Stop always thinking with the wrong end of your body and look around Benedict. This place looks like a war zone. We need to get away from here." Lilith hissed at him, ever since the young Russian had hit puberty Benedict had a new girl almost every month, something that neither his sister nor Lilith and Elena appreciated.

"Benedikt where are Elena and the others? Do you know where my mother is?" Alex ignored Lilith's bickering, to him there were more pressing issues at the moment.

"Elena and Ivanna are over there, coordinating the others while we break camp. But I don't know where your mother is... I believe she has not yet returned from her meeting with the politicians."

"Ah just great, we will go and find her. Leave some of our men here to finish packing, the rest comes with me."

Just as ordered Alex was soon surrounded by twelve of his followers as he and his friends made their way towards the stadium, the last known location of the Minister and his mother. The closer they came to the large building the closer they came to the uproar. They could see a large group of black clad wizards marching around, setting things on fire while some people were floating in the air above them, seemingly begging for their lives. They slowly came closer to Alex and his group as they randomly shot curses in every direction. That was when Alex saw his mother in the company of her assigned guards hurrying in his direction, shock clearly written on her face.

Everyone was shocked when Selene was suddenly hit by a stray curse, one of her guards tried to pull her out of the way but the curse still hit her leg as she fell to the ground quickly covered by her

guards who looked around to find the perpetrator. Alex rushed over to his mother's side, seeing her bleed from a wound on her leg. Otherwise his mother was not hurt, just a bleeding cut on her leg and the shock from the sudden attack. Now that they were all back together they would be able to leave this hellhole. But Alex had other plans. He took a small dagger from his belt and handed it to Lilith.

"Lilith, Elena. You take this portkey and bring my mother away from here. See that she gets to a doctor as soon as possible. And no this is not open for discussion. GO." The anger in his voice quelled any objection from either girl, he never yelled at them before, but both knew that he was not open for any words from them. They crouched next to Selene and as all three touched the charmed dagger they soon disappeared from the scene, back to their home close to the house near Berlin.

"Alex, what shall we do now?" Benedikt asked his friend hesitantly, but everyone could guess what would come now.

"Those bastards dared to attack a member of my family. Take those maggots down, don't hold back, but no killing shots I want them to remember not to mess with my family." He saw his followers exchange glances, no one sure what to do now. "What are you waiting for, attack." Rarely had they seen their leader act like that. As far as Benedikt remembered the last time Alex acted like this was the day he challenged Pajari to a duel for causing the attack that had injured Elena in their first year. Pajari paid for that with his life, if Alex wanted those black robed wizards to live to remember Benedikt was sure that their lives would definitely not be good after the fight.

With this Alex and his group of more than a dozen Covenant members started firing curses back at the black robed wizards, taking their enemies by surprise. They clearly had not expected to meet resistance so early, so far there was not even the slightest sign of a British Auror on this battlefield. And then the battle escalated, crimson and black robed wizards trading curses and other spells, a heated fight, but one that the black wizards were quickly losing. The battle ended as the last of the standing black robed wizards left the scene via portkey, leaving their fallen comrades behind. Two of Alex's followers were really hurt, most others had only received minor scratches. Alex wasn't hurt at all, neither was Benedikt.

"Wuhu what a fight. And I thought coming here would be boring." The young Russian laughed loudly, some others around him joining in. Alex simply smiled, satisfied with their retribution for the attack on his mother.

The next moment the British Aurors arrived, lead by James Potter and the other black haired man Alex had seen with him before. The aurors quickly approached the Covenant members, their wands always ready should they see resistance. Alex followers were on their guard, ready to attack if there was the need to defend themselves. Alex simply frowned at the Aurors, they were late, far too late.

"What happened here? Have you caused this chaos?" Potter stopped only a few feet from Alex, looking intently at the frowning young Grindelwald. Alex said nothing, it was Benedict who answered the aurors with a sneer in his voice.

"We have done your fucking job and taken down these wannabe terrorists." He grabbed an unconscious black robed man and yanked him up so the aurors could see the man and especially his bone white mask.

"A Death Eater..." Potter mumbled absentmindedly, shocked by the sight. Some of the other Aurors gasped in shock, others already checking the black robed wizards for weapons and taking their wands.

"Those worthless bastards attacked my mother, I swear that I will make sure your country will be politically crippled in the ICW should those people not be punished for their actions." Alex voice was calm... and cold. His threat undoubted. "Everyone get going. We return home, no reason to stay in this hell hole any longer."

All Covenant members followed their leader as they walked back to their former camp site from where they would depart with their remaining portkeys. The aurors made no move to stop them, instead they looked at the mass of stunned Death Eaters littering the ground between the burned remains of the tents that stood there before. Yes the members of the Covenant were a force to be reckoned with. Surprising their opponents or not, all members were still school

children and they had just taken down a group of people that were supposedly Death Eaters of the Dark Lord.

The day after the disaster at the World Cup all newspaper had the same headline. The battle between the dark robed wizards and the members of the Crimson Covenant had already been far exaggerated and embellished, some hailing the Covenant as heroes, while some tried to get them punished the same way as the captured criminals for fighting in a civilian area. All discussions in Britain ended after Minister Fudge officially voiced his gratitude for the quick intervention, a decision that was widely disputed in his own government, but Fudge knew he needed to do something to appease the Grindelwald family after the attack on Selene Grindelwald. There was no way he would let this single incident reignite the fights in the ICW.

One of those people that were against Fudge's decision was of course one Albus Dumbledore. He was less than thrilled with the prospect of what would happen this year, should the Covenant be as belligerent as they seemed. For that reason Albus currently sat in his office with his contact in the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, his protégé James Potter.

"So Fudge really has no intention to do anything after that incident. I can't express how much this worries me. We cannot simply look away after they start fighting in our own country." Albus shook his head, a somber expression on his face.

"Be it as it may, the Minister has a point. They only defended themselves after the attack on the young Grindelwald's mother. And I am quite grateful for their intervention to be truthful. My wife and daughter were there, the Auror reinforcements came far too late and I don't even want to imagine what could have happened if those wannabe Death Eaters could have finished what they had started." James couldn't deny that he was a bit biased in this situation. Anyone who dresses up as Death Eater, being the real deal or just some drunk punks, were bad in his books. Ever since they had cost him his son James had done his utmost to rid Britain of those criminals. Seeing them being put down so effectively actually made him quite happy, even though he was not allowed to express that openly because of his position as Auror captain.

"Still I would have preferred a less violent solution. Many people would not have gotten hurt if they hadn't interfered. No one should have been hurt that day." Albus sighed deeply. "It scares me how readily Alexander lead his followers into battle. I surely hope that I can rectify some of his misconceptions during the year he will spent here."

"I don't know why you try so hard, professor. It is quite clear that he has a profound dislike for you. I don't think he will be willing to listen to anything you have to say. Maybe it would be better to just leave him be and see that the tournament proceeds without too many complications." James wasn't the only person who doubted Dumbledores chances at success, but the old wizard had his mind set on this matter. There was something else that Albus knew, something that made him sure that he could convert the Grindelwald heir to the light. "Also don't forget with the Aurors here during the Tournament all the things you do might be leaked to Fudge and you know how the Minister fawns over the Grindelwald heir."

"Ah James my boy, I know there is still good left in the boy, all we have to do is show it to him. Yes this year will be quite special. The Triwizard Tournament will bring the youth of all three schools together."

By now the new year at Durmstrang had started, due to changes to the school quite a lot had changed for the students as well. All new students were handpicked, candidates that would without doubt join the Covenant and contribute greatly to its cause. Across the school large banners of the Crimson Covenant were hanging down from most buildings, undeniable sign of who rules this school now. Where his grandfather could only brand his sign into a single wall of the school, Alexander had succeeded in completely taking it over under the new crest, his own family crest, the Black Wolf.

Also the school curriculum had been changed. Where Kakaroff had only admitted an elective for physical training, there was now a mandatory class that would ensure that all students would be trained to their best physical abilities. Other subjects had been reduced, while some had become even more important. Battle magic was one of the most prized subjects the school would teach now, with two more teachers to assist Professor Kumiega there would be a tutor watching the students progress at any given time in their training.

The High Masters opening speech was short, not that it held much importance any more. By now it was closely followed by a brief greeting from Alexander as well. With all students being part of the Covenant, or in case of the first years future members, Alex greeting was much more anticipated, especially this year that some of their sixth and seventh year students would spent most of the year abroad.

"My dear friends, once more have we gathered here in this school to further our training and grow up to be the wizards and witches we need to be in order to succeed in these crucial times. I especially welcome all the new faces to our honorable school, as I welcome all of you as future brothers and sisters in the Covenant. In a few days you all will take the oath and from there on receive the education you deserve. At this point I especially greet the first Nymphs that have ever attended our noble school." At this he smiled charmingly at a small group of first year girls that looked rather unsure in their places at the table.

A reassuring smile to them, but a simply charade. None of the human students could understand what exactly these few Nymphs must feel at the moment, but all Alex could do now is show the acceptance. With him gone for most of the year he would only have the barely two months at school to make sure that they trust him enough to get their kin to send more children to Durmstrang. At least he would take that fool Karkaroff with him, even after three years in his new role as puppet he had still not stopped some of his more annoying habits. At the moment the man was sneering at the Nymphs with all the contempt he could muster. He did that with all non human students, it scared most first years, but only until the day they find out just how little the man could do against them. Still it was frustrating Alex to put up with him, Karkaroff had long outlived his usefulness and as soon as a replacement had been found Alex would finally get rid of the man. But for appearances sake he had to endure him at least for the rest of this year, it would be better to have a controllable High Master with him when they had to stay at Hogwarts for a year. After that... the man was a goner.

"For all our older students, you all have been informed of this years events. For some reason the Triwizard Tournament has been reestablished this year, mostly due to the insistence of Dumbledore and his ilk." Smirking Alex could see quite a lot of students scowling

when they heard the name of Hogwarts headmaster. No one in the Covenant really thought anything positive about that man.

"Because of this Tournament some of the sixth and seventh year students will be gone for the rest of the year, beginning October 30th. Don't worry about exams, you will join the Hogwarts students on the mutual subjects and for all our additional subjects we will bring suitable teachers along with us." He saw a few teachers nod at him, Professor Kumiega among them. She would have the hardest job of all the teachers as she would have to teach a subject that is forbidden in Britain.

"We will spent most of our time on the ship during our stay, we have no reason to trust the Brits and will be cautious around them at any time. Recent events have shown that they are incapable of keeping their own people save from their terrorists, so we will be bring a squad of Aurors from some of our countries along to ensure the safety of all students." The events during the world cup had made the headlines for quite some time, even now it was a frequently discussed topic. Alex was still a bit bitter when he thought about how abysmal the Brits had taken care of security and how his own mother got hurt due to that. Though her wound was only shallow he would be on his guard, letting neither his family nor his friends get into such a situation again if he could help it.

"All of you that come along, make our school proud and show the Hogwarts and Beauxbatons students what a true wizard and witch is capable of. All of you that stay behind, do your best, always strife for perfection. You all deserve the best and you can only achieve it when you are able to do your best as well. With all this said I bid you all a good night and a productive year at Durmstrang." Alex words were met with applause as he went back to his place, more applause then Karkaroff had ever received in all the years Alex had to endure the man.

During the first weeks of October the time had finally come to prepare the ship for the trip to Hogwarts, since the school had no open connection to the sea they would have to use some more unusual means to get the ship to the lake near the school. Preparations were well under way and most of the chosen Durmstrang representatives were also busy preparing their rooms on the ship. With only about fifty students and around twenty adults,

teachers and aurors, there was enough room that each student could get a room of his own on the giant ship.

Alex was once more on his way to check the status of the preparations on the ship. But he wasn't alone as he slowly walked towards the harbor, one of the young Nymphs that had started at Durmstrang this year was accompanying him on his way. She was the most forward of the group, where the other Nymphs were still shy around the human students, she was outgoing and openly trying to befriend as many people as possible. Her current choice to befriend happened to be Alex and she was quite persistent in following him as long as he didn't tell her to stay away from some places.

"Will you really be gone all year? I find it sad, we just got here and soon you will leave again." The young Nymph pouted, much to Alex amusement.

"Yes, Astris. We will be gone for at least 9 months and only return shortly before the year at Durmstrang comes to an end. You all will do fine, even without us." Alex laughed when the small girl bounced all around him.

"But what will we do if some people here decide to treat us differently just because you are not around? Some of the humans are really scary."

"Don't worry. Not all of us sixth and seventh years will be gone. I will leave Ivanna in charge here, she will take excellent care of you and the others. And if all else fails I have portkeys that will bring me back here in the blink of an eye and then I will kick the asses of whoever believes he has to cause trouble."

"Still I would rather come along and see more of this world. Blasted rules that I have to stay here."

"Astris, you have just arrived here at Durmstrang. Enjoy your first year here and get to know the school. Believe me, with each year that passes you will have less time to appreciate the school. Graduating is a hard work. And believe me you don't want to see Scotland. According to Benedikt the food is gruesome there." He couldn't help but chuckle at the face she made at that. This young Nymph acted more like a little child than an eleven year old that had

joined the Covenant only a few weeks prior. "But now you should hurry back to the school, don't you try to use me as excuse to skip classes." With another smile and a mock bow the Nymph ran along, not looking back as Alex boarded the ship. He somehow felt sorry for Ivanna. After his comment it was pretty much a given that Astris would now haunt her. Some of the non human children acted quite different from the pure blood children that Alex had gotten to know in his own first year. All the changes to the school did not just make it a better place for the Covenant, but also a more relaxed place for all students.

The decision wasn't easy, but Alex knew he would have to leave at least one member of his inner circle here at Durmstrang to make sure things would proceed as planned. Ivanna was the first choice for this duty. She was intelligent enough to prevent anyone from taking over the school in his absence and the fact that she had already stated that she had no real intention in even trying to compete in the Tournament made her the obvious choice. Benedikt was one of the first to agree, the thought of having his sister safe at Durmstrang while they would be at the proverbial 'Lions den' pleased the young Russian.

On board of the ship Alex quickly went down to the lower decks to find one of the larger rooms on the ship. Inside was currently a group of seventh year students along with a professor, preparing a large crystal. A focus stone that would help them with spell they would need to bring the massive ship from here to the lake near Hogwarts. Working with this crystal was dangerous, once it was infused with magic it could cause a big explosion.

"Professor Schaefer, is everything going as planned? You know we only have less the two more weeks until we have to depart from here." Alex looked pointedly at the man. Torsten Schaefer was the teacher for Runes at Durmstrang and a distant relative of Alex father. A strange fellow, but a decent teacher, at least that was what most students thought of him. They could only hope that the Hogwarts teacher for runes was quite as capable, unfortunately Schaefer would remain at Durmstrang because he is the only teacher for this position here.

"Yes, don't worry. The crystal will be set up before the day after tomorrow. We just have to finish the last sets of Runes around it, then we can begin to charge it to test how well it works. You will

safely and timely arrive at Hogwarts, no reason to worry." Schaefer smiled pleasantly at Alex before he returned his attention to his work.

"Fine, but make sure that this thing is safe, I have no intention to be blown up with the entire ship just because your little experiment went wrong." The professor ignored the Grindelwald heir, too absorbed in his work once more. Alex did take this as his cue to leave them be. He still had one more stop to make on the ship before he would head to his potions class. He wanted to inspect his rooms. He got one of the largest quarters on the ship, bigger than even the rooms of the High Master, though in Alex's case it had good reasons why he got more space than Karkaroff.

Alex was quite satisfied with the current status of the ship, the preparations were almost complete and all were just waiting for October 30th, Hogwarts would not know what hit it once the Covenant was done with that school.

AN: So far for Chapter 15. I am not quite sure whether I will pair up Elena and Victor. It was some idea I had briefly. There are still others like Benedikt who could be possible partners for her, time will tell who it will be. But please feel free to tell me in the Reviews who you would prefer for her. I also know that Ivanna has become less and less important during the last few chapters. She will still play a major role. Even though she will not be at Hogwarts with the others she will be part of the story whenever parts of the story will deal with what is happening at Durmstrang during that year.

Another thing about the Covenant members taking down the wannabe Death Eaters at the World Cup, they are not insanely overpowered or something like that. They are skilled and strong fighters and they had the advantage to surprise their opponents. Same for Alex's reaction, he won't suddenly turn into an insane war obsessed maniac, this was rather another situation where a person he is close to got hurt and he wanted revenge for that.

Also should people wish for it I will add some short character profiles for the main OCs of the story on my own profile, just let me know if anyone has interest in something like that. If there is enough interest I will add them to provide the basic information on the OCs, I know it is hard to remember some things when there is a month and more in between the chapters.

Oh well I could spent hours discussing and explaining parts of the chapter but I won't waste time and most people don't even read this part.

As always please leave a Review, I know OC stories get less attention then those with established characters but every Review is welcome and contributes to the quality of the story.

Chapter 16: Prejudice

Mere days were left until the students from Durmstrang would depart towards Hogwarts. Last days filled with work, busy schedules and last minute preparations. To the Covenant members this was more than just a simple school trip. For many months they would have to fend for themselves in a country that had so far done anything short of declaring war to disband the Covenant. They would have to stay at the very school that was lead by the man that had declared them as dark and had repeatedly tried to get his hands on their leader. Though the Covenant members would never see themselves as dark they knew very well that the 'Light' side, lead by Albus Dumbledore was their greatest enemy and the greatest threat to their existence. This year at Hogwarts would not be easy, neither side would let the other gain an advantage during the Tournament that had forced Durmstrang to visit the rivaling school.

The students that would accompany Alex to Hogwarts were all running about, getting whatever things they wished to bring along into their rooms on the ship. Because of their soon departure they were all exempted from their classes for the last days. To Alex this didn't mean any downtime, Karkaroff was not trustworthy enough with most duties. It was no big secret that his time was running out and the High Master of Durmstrang showed no real intention on aiding the group that had usurped his power at the school. So all duties had to be fulfilled or observed by Alex and his inner circle of the Covenant.

"Are the training rooms sufficiently warded or should we send for someone to redo the work, professor?" Alex had been inspecting the ship with some of the professors that would accompany them. At the moment they were standing in the large training room that would have to work as the only place that they could train battle magic away from the prying eyes of Dumbledore and his likes. Professor Kumiega observed the entire room with a critical eye, searching for any weaknesses in the wards of the room. It would do them no good if they were to damage the ship during their training.

"Everything seems to be in order. We won't be able to go all out during the lessons, but we would have to go outside even here at Durmstrang for that. For one year this will do, hopefully. Maybe we can find a place somewhere outside, somewhere away from the notice of our enemies." The Professor looked thoughtful, before she

shook her head sadly. "Alas I believe that won't be possible. I doubt there is any place even remotely close to Hogwarts where we could practice undisturbed."

"We better not risk it. No need to get you arrested for doing your job, just because the Brits are so narrow minded on what subjects their students should learn. I am sure you can find a way to keep the lessons at a sufficient level even with this minor drawback." He gave her a pleasant smile, while she simply looked at the him with an arched eyebrow before she returned to her inspection. "I shall leave you alone then, professor. In case you need something you know where to find me."

Without waiting for a reply Alex left the room, quietly walking down the hallway of the ship. He was pondering where to go next. He had already checked on that damned crystal twice this day, he couldn't shake the feeling that professor Schaefer would curse him should he show up a third time and interrupt the last hours the Runes professor had with that focus stone. The man seemed rather obsessed with his own work and drilled his seventh year students that would be on the trip to Hogwarts to take good care of the stone since he wanted it back to study it further once the year would come to an end.

Alex musings were interrupted when he was called by someone, when he turned around to see the person he smirked at the sight of Lilith and Elena, walking towards him in a sedated pace. "Ah Lilith, Elena. What brings my two favorite ladies to me this fine day?"

Lilith huffed slightly while Elena regarded her brother with an impassive look. "You know exactly why I am here, Alex. Care to explain to me why everyone has a room on this ship, except for me?" Lilith looked slightly exasperated, a sign for Alex that he should better skip his usual banter unless he wanted her to hit him.

"Hehe you see, because of our special circumstances I have decided that we should share a room during our stay in Britain. No need to give those foreigners any false ideas by acting all distant when we will be married the moment we graduate from Durmstrang."

"You did what... I can't believe it. Why might live under the same roof already, but this... are you mad?" Lilith didn't really know what to think about at that particular moment.

"Aw don't act all shy all of a sudden, Lilith. Sooner or later will have to share the same room... and the same bed, why not start practicing now. I am sure our parents would approve of it wholeheartedly." Alex smirk grew even wider as he watched his fiancée. Elena stood slightly behind Lilith, grinning at the reaction of her future sister in law.

"You are incorrigible. I can't believe it." Lilith shook her head in frustration. "God help you should you try anything funny while we are in Scotland, Alex. And your stop grinning, Elena. Go on that date with Victor already before you attempt to understand relationships."

Alex laughed at that, seeing his sister all flustered at the moment, before she glared slightly at him. She was not amused about his bet with Victor and Alex was glad that she had so much self control or else she might have gone all Veela on him and attacked him in an early stage of her transformation. God knows how dangerous it is to anger a Veela especially while she is still in her adolescence and does not have full control of her transformation. He quickly tried to divert the attention away from him and thankfully Lilith had just given him the perfect opportunity for that.

"So, Lilith you say we are in an relationship here? Care to tell me how far this relationship goes for you?" He came a bit closer to her, looking directly into her emerald green eyes. But Lilith did not answer him, instead she huffed exasperated and stormed off, much to the Grindelwald sibling's amusement. "Oh well, guess I have to find out another way."

The day of their departure had finally come, in only a few hours they would be at Hogwarts. Most students greatly anticipated this day, students from both schools were quite curious. The Durmstrang students because they would have to fend for themselves in seemingly enemy territory, the Hogwarts students simply because they wanted to see those supposed dark wizards from Durmstrang with their own eyes. But not all of Hogwarts would stand against the Covenant, there were a selected few that came from British families that secretly supported the Grindelwald family and an even greater number of indifferent students that did not judge without knowing.

"I trust you will know how to handle this school until we return, right Ivanna?" Alex had a worried look. He was one of those who opposed this whole Triwizard idea, but with Karkaroff's acceptance they had to attend now, the pride and honor of the school would depend on it. They would look weak should they suddenly back out from the Tournament and it would only give the wrong signal to the people. Alex just couldn't risk people thinking that he and the Covenant were afraid of Albus Dumbledore.

"I will be alright. I have Arvid and Rebecca with me so don't worry. It is not like the entire school will suddenly burn down just because you are not around for some months." She laughed slightly, trying to hide it with a hand, but to no avail.

"Yeah yeah I know. But in any case you know how to get into contact should anything happen that you can't handle on your own." Alex looked around, seeing that most of the group that would leave for Hogwarts was already waiting on the ship. "Well I should get going. We will see each other in July then." He quickly turned and walked towards the ship, not seeing the small wave from Ivanna before she returned to the other Durmstrang students that were there to say their farewells to Alex group. She knew why Alex was so adamant about double checking everything even here at Durmstrang. With him and the rest of the inner circle gone it was now her duty to lead the Covenant here at the school. And with Karkaroff also gone she was also somewhat in charge of the entire place. Karkaroff left his deputy behind, but the professor had no real intention to do anything that went against the wishes of the Covenant and would give them free reign of the entire school. It was a heavy burden for the young Russian girl, but Alex had shown his confidence in her ability to do this and she would not disappoint him. She would not show any weaknesses.

Once Alex had boarded the ship they wasted no time to leave the port, the ship would be steered solely by the students, Alex believed it to be safer for them to be in control of everything and Karkaroff was content with sitting around and brooding about his future. They would take the ship out on the open sea, traveling for some hours before the actual work would begin. To get the ship to a lake in Scotland that had no connection to the open sea was quite tricky. The magical power to actually teleport something as big as this ship over such a distance would be tremendous and to add to it they had

also made special plans to surprise their hosts further. Their ship would submerge and then rise from the depths of the lake before the very eyes of all Hogwarts students and teachers. It would be a feat that would underline the power and abilities of Durmstrang. But to achieve this was not easy. That was the reason they had this giant volatile focus crystal on board of their ship. The students would use it to amplify their magic, creating the needed power to move their ship.

Most students were already assembled around the crystal, starting to focus their magic on it as Alex arrived. This entire plan could go wrong on some many different points that he was tempted more than once to drop this idea and find another way to travel to Hogwarts. But in the end he and his inner circle decided to use the ship, the majestic ship that was a sign of the pride of Durmstrang. It would serve them well there, not just as transportation, but also as home and school during their stay.

As Alex approached the crystal he could already feel the magic pour from it, as he placed a hand on it he could feel it hum from the power in it. Power waiting to be released. Moving the ship would need a spell similar to Apparition. But instead of just one person there was the need to transport the entire ship with everyone on board to the desired location. A giant side along apparition so to speak. From the Barents Sea to the depths of the lake near Hogwarts, a feat that would gain the recognition and admiration of many. Luckily the ship was already warded enough to be able to submerge without water entering the ship, so there was no need to take care of that as well. So all that would have to be done was move the ship.

"Alex, everyone is ready. All entrances to the decks have been closed so no water can enter the ship. I would say we are ready." Elena regarded her brother with a curious look, he was still standing next to the crystal, one hand on the stone, eyes closed. "Alex? Everything alright?" She looked worried as he stood there unresponsive for a moment before he opened his eyes and looked at her with a small smile.

"The sheer power behind this thing is amazing. No surprise Professor Schaefer is so obsessed with this crystal." Almost reluctantly he pulled his hand away from the crystal, still watching it in awe. "What time is now?"

"19:58 local time. That would be 17:58 in Britain's timezone. They expect us in a few minutes. Should we keep them waiting for a bit?" Elena smirked when she asked, she knew the answer beforehand.

"Just a bit. We will emerge from the lake at 18:20. Let them anticipate our arrival a bit, it will make the show just more spectacular for them." Alex looked around and saw most of his fellow students sitting in a circle around the crystal, waiting for his signal. The mood was tense, no one really spoke a word. "Anyone missing?"

"Nope, all are here and ready. The teachers and our auror guards are a few decks above us in a lounge drinking, so they will not disturb us."

"Then let us begin." Alex placed a hand on the crystal once more, moments later Elena followed his example and did the same, one hand on the crystal, the other on Alex shoulder. Soon they were joined by Benedikt, Lilith and Victor. They had decided beforehand that the crystal would have to much power to be handled by one person alone, so they chose a group that would use the spell together. So they now stood there in a circle around the crystal, one hand on the stone, the other on the shoulder of the person next to them. They would have to be completely synchronous, unless they wanted to destroy the ship. Because of that they had their hands on the shoulder of the person next to them, using a form of mind reading conducted by physical contact to know when to use the spell. The rest of the students sat in a circle around the crystal, focusing their magic on it to ensure it had enough power. To an outsider it would have looked like some obscure ritual, but it was quite clear that no one would ever find out what happens on this ship, this situation included. Not even their teachers, except for Schaefer who had prepared the crystal.

With a surge of magic that everyone on the ship could feel the majestic vessel disappeared from the Barents Sea, reappearing only moments later in the black depths of the Hogwarts lake. Alex sighed relieved when they could feel that the ship had safely arrived, now they would only have to find out if they arrived at their intended location.

"Alright everyone, good work. Now Lilith please go up to map room and find out whether we have arrived at Hogwarts or not." Lilith simply nodded before she left the room. In the map room they had a large map that would show the entire planet, even those parts hidden from muggle view by magical means. The map would always show the exact location of the ship, in all the years it had existed it had never been wrong with the location.

Alex could see the slightly tired looks on some of the other student's faces, this spell had drained all of them quite a bit. It would not do to show up at Hogwarts barely standing because of exhaustion, so they quickly handed out potions to all students, prepared exactly for this situation to give them the energy needed to make a lasting impression on the other schools.

A few minutes later Lilith had returned, a smug look on her face. "We did it. We are exactly where we wanted to be." Most of the present students cheered when they heard that. Quite frankly none of them wanted to repeat this draining spell any time soon.

"Who would have thought. I was quite worried, the distance and the possibility of wards being in place here... well good thing it worked then." Benedikt couldn't help himself but laugh again.

"Nay, they wards don't extend over the entire lake. We are at the far end of it, far outside of the anti apparition wards. And the distance was nothing with this overpowered crystal. So don't you worry Benedikt, no bad wards will hurt you right now." Lilith smirked at the Russian, gaining a mock glare in return from him.

"Fine, fine. What time is it?" Alex interrupted their banter, getting them all back to the situation at hand. Hogwarts was waiting for their arrival.

"18:16, Alex. Do you wish to wait a little longer or shall we emerge now and let them have their show?"

"Prepare the ship, we emerge now as we approach the shore near the castle. Everyone else get yourselves ready. Prepare the banners and check your uniforms. We are here to show our superiority and pride as Durmstrang students and as representatives of the Crimson Covenant." Alex authoritative voice carried through the entire room, everyone listening attentively before the students nodded and got up

to quickly leave the room. "Meet up on deck in five minutes, no excuses for tardiness."

At the same time the large crowd waiting in front of Hogwarts was getting more and more impatient with every minute that passed. The delegation from Beauxbatons had arrived a few minutes before and was now standing outside, waiting for the last school to arrive. It was a cold day, even for the Hogwarts students that were used to this kind of weather. But for the Beauxbatons students it was a freezing torture, they came from a much warmer place in southern France, their uniforms not even remotely sufficient against the cold in Scotland. So they all waited in the cool evening air, trying to find any sign of Durmstrang's arrival.

"Ah I can't believe they make us wait. Damn dark wizards. I bet they are out there somewhere and laughing their asses off at seeing us freeze to death out here." Antares Black groaned loudly, much to his fellow Gryffindor's amusement.

"Maybe they won't even show up. Maybe they are scared of Dumbledore, he has already defeated one Grindelwald, maybe this younger dark lord does not want to risk his ass by coming here." The comment from Ron Weasley got many other students around him to chuckle at the thought. But not all students seemed amused about the two Gryffindor's words. Standing among her fellow Slytherin fifth years, one Cassiopeia Black simply glared at her brother and his redhead sidekick, murmuring about "Bloody idiots" among other things.

"Look there on the lake!" The exclamation from Rose Potter caused many heads to snap towards the black water of the lake. There they could see the mast of a ship emerging from the water, soon followed by a big ship made of dark wood. No one knew how the ship got there in the first place, but seeing the big ship emerge from the dark water looked quite impressive.

"Ah finally our last guests have arrived wonderful." Dumbledores cheerful voice could be heard by all students, all still watching the dark ship with undisguised curiosity. On top of the mast were two flags, flying wildly in the wind. One flag was yellow with the Durmstrang crest on it, the other flag above the Durmstrang one was crimson, sporting the Black Wolf, the crest of the Crimson Covenant. To all present Hogwarts and Beauxbatons students this

meant only one thing. The Covenant had arrived at the school. What this would mean for all them was yet to be seen.

Alex and Benedikt were already standing on deck, watching the large crowd in front of the castle with some interest. The rest of the students as well as the teachers slowly came up to join the Grindelwald heir, all looking mildly interested in the school before them.

Benedikt whistled lowly as he saw the castle looming ahead of them. "Interesting place, I've got to admit. They call Durmstrang a dark school but this castle looks so much darker and more menacing I think I'm envious."

Alex chuckled at his friends words, though he had to admit that he too was slightly impressed with the castle. "Well there are a lot of things they don't know. They know nothing about Durmstrang, not where it is located, not what it looks like and not what is really taught there. All they believe to know is based on assumptions. They don't need the truth. To them we must be evil, which good wizard would have to hide so many things?" The sarcasm in Alex voice at the end was palpable, but Benedikt knew Alex was right with his words. Ignorance breeds prejudice. "And you get an entire year to explore and enjoy this... dark place. Surely they have some secret dungeons for torturing stupid school kids or something. And believe me after a year here you will be happy that we return to Durmstrang for our last year."

"Let us hope Durmstrang is still the same once we return. With Ivanna in charge god knows how that will turn out. She could order the entire school to be painted pink when she has one of her mood swings." Several people around them laughed at the exclamation, the picture of their school completely in pink was horrendous but also extremely funny.

"We will see, Benedikt. We will see." With that Alex turned around seeing nearly everyone standing on deck waiting to disembark. The ship had come to a stop close to the shore. With some quick conjuring a solid stone pier appeared from the shallow water, connecting the ship to the shore, making it easy to come and go as long as the ship remained anchored here. "Okay everyone, just as we have planned. Banner carriers up front, then two lines behind them, inner circle and teachers walking in an alley between the two

lines. Don't trip or anything, we are not here to embarrass us in front of those people." Alex gestured towards the waiting students and teachers from Hogwarts and Beauxbatons. "See them standing there, undisciplined like the fools they are. Show them the pride of Durmstrang, show them the superiority of our upbringing."

"Of course, Lord Grindelwald." Benedikt smirked as he saw Alex frown at his words.

"I still don't like it that you want to call me that in front of the Brits. They will try something stupid as soon as they hear any of you call me that." Alex shook his head, his gaze wandering back to the students waiting in front of the castle.

"Come on, it will be funny to see their faces once they hear it. You already are a dark lord in their eyes, why not show them a true lord. You are already something like a liege lord to most of us, let us show them that you are a superior leader." Benedikt defended his foolish plan. Alex knew that it wasn't solely the idea of the young Russian, but that also most others agreed fully to this new title for their leader. This could go terribly wrong, but it would be interesting none the less.

And so they approached the waiting crowd. A student carrying the banner of Durmstrang to his left, another carrying the banner of the Covenant to his right. This way Alex walked flanked by Elena and Karkaroff towards the already smiling Albus Dumbledore. Lilith, Victor and Benedikt followed them closely behind the Grindelwald siblings and their High Master, Benedikt being hard pressed not to look around too much like a small child in a toy store, looking for a new plaything. All Durmstrang students were dressed in the special uniforms that Karkaroff had ordered for the dueling competition several years ago, the uniform that had been a sign for Durmstrang's elite students. Those Hogwarts students that had taken part in that competition recognized the uniforms immediately and gulped at the sight, remembering their fierce opponents. But different from the competition all students now wore the same long cloaks, the crimson cloaks only Alex and Elena had back then.

"Ah Igor, Alexander how good that you have finally arrived. We were already worried that there might have been complications on your way here." With his ever grandfatherly smile, eyes twinkling madly

the elder wizard regarded the the persons before him, completely disregarding Elenas presence next to the two men.

Alex scowled at the old man, even Karkaroff was not happy about the unwanted familiarity in Dumbledores greeting. But before Igor could say a word Alex already expressed his displeasure at the situation. "I do not remember giving you the permission to use my given name, Mr Dumbledore. I told you once that I will not tolerate such disrespect."

The smile of the older wizard was barely effected by the words from the Grindelwald heir. "My apologies Mr Grindelwald. Please forgive this old man, in my age people tend to forget things. I assure you that I had no ill intent. I simply hope that we can end the animosity and grow to understand each other better." The Hogwarts students close enough to hear the conversation stared oddly at their headmaster and the Grindelwald heir. Instead of talking to Durmstrang's High Master, Dumbledore talked to a student almost as if he was his equal in station.

"We shall see what this year will bring us, Mr Dumbledore. We will need trust for the things you wish to achieve this year, and so far you have done very little to gain my trust. Far opposite in fact. Even now you disrespect my family by purposely ignoring my sister, showing no respect towards her." He gestured towards Elena, the young Veela standing to his right with an impassive look on her face. She didn't really care for anything the old wizard had to say to her, at the moment she was more occupied with looking anywhere but the direction of the Beauxbatons students.

When her gaze drifted their the first time she had immediately seen a somewhat familiar face, recognizing her cousin among the french students. Though it had been many years since their last meeting she could still recognize Fleur Delacour, that girl had barely changed in those years, still wearing a slightly haughty look. Fleur had seen her cousin the moment Elena left the ship and watched her with narrowed eyes. Just seeing Fleur tested Elena's self control, lest she wanted to go over and give the girl a piece of her mind, saying those things she wanted to for a long time, maybe even slap her around once or twice.

Meanwhile the strained conversation between Alex and Dumbledore continued. "You have my apologies Mr Grindelwald... and you of

course as well Ms Grindelwald. Again there was no malevolent meaning here. I only assumed you and your High Master would be here to lead the Durmstrang students. But why don't we postpone our discussions, there are still other things that need to be done this evening. And we got an entire year to talk about... misconceptions." The grandfatherly face could have fooled Alex, if he didn't already know the real Albus Dumbledore behind this mask. The man that condemns without knowing. The man that wanted to take him away from his loving family just because of who his grandfather was. Yes they would talk later, but Dumbledore would not like the outcome of those conversations, at least not as long as he stubbornly clung to his beliefs of light and dark.

"Yes, let us proceed, I have no intention to stand out here all night. And as it seems your french guests would appreciate the chance to finally warm up. Don't want anyone to believe we won this tournament just because our competition was sick." Alex light joke cause some of the Durmstrang students to chuckle lightly, but they tried to keep up their impassive front to the other schools. First impressions would stick, what they do afterward could do little to change the way they would look at the Durmstrang students from now on. The Beauxbatons students glared at Alex for his comment. It was nothing serious, but to them it was a way he tried to ridicule their school, something they would not stand for.

Karkaroff simply stood there, seemingly forgotten by the other two. He wisely held his tongue for now, but his extreme displeasure at the way he was treated here was plainly obvious. He was the High Master of Durmstrang god dammit, but no one acknowledged him. All Dumbledore cared about was that Grindelwald boy. Igor seriously would have to find a way to get out of this mess before he was reduced to the laughingstock of this event.

Quickly two of the schools entered the building, the Hogwarts students seemed to be the most eager to return to their great hall for dinner, closely followed by the Beauxbatons students who would do anything to get out of the cold evening air here in Scotland. For the Durmstrang students the temperature was quite pleasant. They were used to much worse at their own school. They simply walked in a sedated pace, observing their surroundings more openly now that they were no longer the center of all attention.

"Have you seen how they ogled us? No sense for propriety." Victor had a look of disgust as Alex turned around to see him. No wonder they ogled him, he was a celebrity after all, his Quidditch career made him famous all around the world.

"Don't mind them, Victor. Etiquette is not a subject here, apparently they didn't even learn manners from their families. Simply ignore the rabble, they are not worth our time." Elena tried to appease the Bulgarian a bit, but he continued scowling none the less.

"Elena is right, Victor. This goes for all of you. Don't get riled up because of something like the apparent lack of manners from these people. We shouldn't let ourselves be provoked this easily. Now come. Let us head inside and see what else those Brits have in store for us." Everyone payed attention to Alex words, some murmured their consent. None of them would go against Alex orders, but that didn't mean they liked the way those Hogwarts students looked at them.

But they were not completely alone. From some distance a group of British aurors watched the foreign students. Among them was James Potter, he eagerly accepted this mission as it was a chance for him to keep an eye on his daughter while the school would host the dangerous tournament. The aurors presence was a given after the debacle at the world cup, there was no chance that Fudge would allow such a thing to happen again, especially when the young Grindelwald would be a guest at the British school. The volatile political situation in the ICW could easily get out of hand should anything happen to Grindelwald, his sister, fiancée or any of his fellow students. Fudge was more concerned with the safety of the foreign guests then the security of their own children, that much was evident. And so the aurors were here now, watching the welcoming of the guest schools. James had to admit the entrance of the Durmstrang delegation was impressive. First the ship appearing from the ground of the lake when there was no way to get to the lake in the first place and then way the Durmstrang students had marched up the shore. Truly an interesting sight, James knew these people should not be underestimated. Especially not Grindelwald. James already pitied his mentor, Albus would have no chance to control that boy.

Inside the school the students were once more wondering where the Durmstrang delegation was. All students had sat down at their

house tables, the guests from Beauxbatons sitting down at the table of the Ravenclaws, much to said houses pleasure. But still there was no sign of Durmstrang. They were taking their time to enter the hall, much to the annoyance of some students in the great hall.

"Man what is taking those buffoons so long, I want to eat dammit." Ron Weasley exclaimed loudly, earning him snickers from his friends seated around him.

"Don't worry Ron. They will come. Not like they have much of a choice now that they are here. Maybe they are planning something." Antares mused mostly to himself, but loud enough for most other students at his table to hear.

"Yeah they are planning how to poison us, they are no better then the snakes." Ron looked condescendingly towards the table on the far left of the hall where the green banner of Slytherin hung above the table.

"Don't be ridiculous Ron. They will not try any such thing as long as Professor Dumbledore is around." Hermione Granger berated the redhead, clearly annoyed by his constant whining. "And I heard that some of them are supposed to be quite likeable. Don't you agree, Rose?"

Rose Potter sat a bit apart from the loud group of her fellow fourth years, only accompanied by an equally silent Neville Longbottom. She looked up to Gryffindor's resident bookworm as Hermione talked to her. "Y...Yeah. My father once had spent some time talking to Alexander Grindelwald. He said that the boy was... quite a pleasant person. He says so even now after all that happened. He believes that there is something else to his agenda then simple racism."

Ron scoffed at that, glaring at Rose. Antares looked doubtful, but knew better then to openly doubt the daughter of his fathers best friend. Hermione though looked smug, getting some sort of proof for her statement. "You see, Ron. Not all of them are bad." No one dared comment on the paradox of having a muggleborn witch actually sort of defend the Covenant of all people. Hermione would continue berating them for hours if they did. God alone knows why she did this.

"Yeah and they fought against the bad ones at the World Cup, how can they be evil then, huh?" Antares added his two Knuts to the conversation. He wanted to say something more, but exactly that moment the doors of the Great Hall burst open and the Durmstrang delegation marched in, still carrying their banners with them, though in a smaller, shrunken form.

Alex looked around the Hall, unimpressed by the simple tables and benches. It also did not escape his notice that all tables were full of students, nowhere enough room for his entire group. As they stood there and watched none of the Durmstrang students made a move to sit down at any of the tables. The hall was deathly silent for some moments, everyone anticipating where the Grindelwald heir and his followers would decide to sit down. The silence ended though when Dumbledore spoke up. "Please Mr Grindelwald, have a seat at one of the tables. I am sure there is enough space at all tables so all of your fellow students will find a place." His grandfatherly smile firm in place he looked at Alex, but he only received an unreadable expression from him.

"I beg your pardon headmaster, but this... arrangement you want to happen will not come to be. We will not be split up just because you don't have the courtesy to provide additional tables for your guests. I guess it will be better for me and my followers to dine on our ship. The High Master can surely inform us of anything interesting you had to say. Good evening, Mr Dumbledore." Without waiting for reply all Durmstrang students left the hall, much to Dumbledore's shock. This was not what he had planned. He had hoped that Alexander would sit at the Gryffindor table with as few of his followers as possible. After the world cup he would surely not want to sit with the children of Death Eaters at the Slytherin table and Ravenclaw was already full, while Hufflepuff was filled with muggleborn students. He had really hoped that his Gryffindors could have some positive influence on the young Grindelwald during this year. But apparently he had underestimated the pride of his guests and that they would be unwilling to be split up. Only Karkaroff remained from the Durmstrang delegation, sporting a gleeful smirk as he approached the head table to sit next to Dumbledore. He might not like Alex all that much anymore, but he always enjoyed it when someone thwarted Dumbledore's plans and manipulations.

Once the Covenant members had reached their ship the group dispersed to several rooms, waiting for their own dinner to be served

for them in the ship's own mess hall. Alex was glad they had the forethought to ask his followers to bring some of their family house elves with them, since Durmstrang had no elves, but human servants. Originally he had planned this because he feared for their food at Hogwarts to be laced with potions and whatnot. But thankfully they would not have to worry about that now.

"They are quite foolish, aren't they? What did Dumbledore expect, that we split up so they can take us down in smaller groups? Bloody fools. Only a daft wanker would actually believe that such a plan could succeed." Benedikt raved on and on while they had retired to one of the common rooms of the ship as they waited for their dinner.

"Language, Benedikt. I agree that they are idiots though. Did you see them start to whisper amongst each other the moment we entered the hall. Really they are all acting so immature." Lilith looked somehow disappointed by their fellow students here at Hogwarts. She sat down on the same couch as Alex, leaning slightly against him as he loosely slung his arm around her shoulder.

"It was to be expected. We are interesting to them, we represent all the things they are told to resent without being actually taught about. They know nothing about us, yet their parents and teachers told them to be weary of us. Also we learn what they call dark arts, forbidden magic. Things are so much more interesting for little children when they are forbidden. Also they lack our maturity. We have been brought up to act mature and responsible from a very young age, they are allowed to be children for most of their youth. To them their behavior is totally normal, to us it is childish and inappropriate."

"Still doesn't mean that I like being gawked at like an animal in a zoo." Victor scoffed after hearing Alex's words.

"You don't like it right now, just wait how bad it will be once you have become our champion, Victor." Alex laughed at the Bulgarian's face. Victor sported an expression somewhere between shock and anger.

"And what makes you so sure he will be champion, Alex? Could be you as well, or maybe Elena." Lilith looked at him from the side, seeing him smile at her.

"Ah my dear Lilith, I know exactly that the champion sits here with us in this room. But neither I nor Elena will attempt to join the Tournament. It would be just what Dumbledore wants. To see what the new generation of Grindelwalds is truly capable of. And neither you nor Benedikt are on a level anywhere near Victors." She looked at him with a strange expression after hearing this.

"So you doubt we would be able to compete? Do you believe us to be inferior to Victor?"

"Yes Lilith. Believe me I don't say this to mock you, but I have trained with Victor for a number of years. I know his true strength and potential. Only Elena and I are on equal footing with him strength wise. And don't pout my dear, I have different plans for you during our stay. Both you and Benedikt will be busy with other things during this year."

Inside the castle the students were stunned by the sudden departure of the entire Durmstrang delegation except their High Master. Igor Karkaroff took his place next to Dumbledore, waiting for the headmasters speech and the information about the tournament he was here for.

"Igor, why did you let your students go just like that. We had really hoped that this could be a chance for the schools to get to know each other, but if they go to eat on your ship that will be detrimental to this cause." Dumbledore looked disappointed to the Durmstrang High Master next to him, but he only got a scowl in return.

"Did you really expect that Grindelwald and his fellow students would let such disrespect slide, Dumbledore? You invite other schools here but you don't even show the minimum of respect by providing sufficient seating arrangements for all guests." Karkaroff sneered at the older man.

"There are sufficient places at three of the house tables, the Beauxbatons students simply filled the space at one of four tables. I truly don't see their reasons for leaving." Grandfatherly mask firm in place Albus Dumbledore let out a sigh, enforcing his disappointed look for all students and teachers to see.

"So you expect them to split up just because we brought a bigger delegation than the French? And where should they sit after splitting

up? With the students that are associated with some of the people responsible for the attack on Mrs Grindelwald a few months ago? With the students that are commonly seen as the rejects of your school? Or the house that had sneered at them from the very moment they left the ship simply because you planted the idea in their heads that my students are all dark wizards and witches?" Karkaroff almost laughed at the expression he got from Dumbledore. The Hogwarts headmaster was actually at a loss for words. "Now please get on with whatever you have to say about the tournament. I don't have all day you know."

Cassiopeia Black sat at the Slytherin table , a pensive look on her face. She had heard quite a lot about the Covenant and its leader. And sure some of the rumors did not do those people justice. Without blinking they just disregarded Dumbledore as if he was just an annoying fly. They exuded an aura of pride and strength that many at Hogwarts lacked. And to her annoyance one of those persons just came to bug her.

"Cousin, how nice to see you actually dine with us tonight. Not interested in going to the kitchens to eat in solitude this time? I guess you did come to see the show, those Durmstrang students sure did not disappoint." Draco Malfoy sat down next to her as if he owned the place, looking smug and pleased at seeing someone oppose Dumbledore plans so openly and effectively. "Maybe I should head to that ship tomorrow and extend an invitation that they are welcome at our table whenever they wish to spend time here."

"If you know what's good for you, you should try to avoid Grindelwald as long as possibly. Wasn't your father one of those selected few that managed to run away when the Covenant kicked their asses at the World Cup? Maybe they will try to lure your father out by letting you dangle from the mast of their ship. Surely you don't want to risk that, do you, Draco?" Cassiopeia couldn't suppress the gleeful smirk at seeing Draco pale because of her words, before he got angry.

"My father wasn't one of those fools. He wouldn't have lost a fight against school children like that weak idiots. My father will put an end to those defamatory lies that his political enemies spread to discredit him. And Grindelwald will see that, he will know who the right people here at Hogwarts are, mark my words!" In an angry huff he stood up and returned to his sycophants.

"And that is why I usually eat elsewhere to avoid this table, stupid immature children that can't see what is going on around them because of their egos." Cassiopeia murmured this to herself, but some other students at her table heard her words and couldn't help but smirk. They fully agreed with her, knowing full well what to expect from the Covenant.

A few minutes later Dumbledore held his speech about the Triwizard Tournament. The entire event already got most students overly excited, but when he stated the rules about the age limit most students groaned. The Gryffindors were the loudest at that, many of them dreaming of fame and the prize money at the end of the Tournament. Little did they know that Dumbledore already had changed his decision to allow students of sixth and seventh year to add their names to the Goblet of Fire. Originally the ministry intended to only allow the seventh years to compete, but Dumbledore convinced them that it was perfectly alright to let them all compete. It could have discouraged certain people he wanted to have at Hogwarts to even come this year. Once the speech was over Karkaroff quickly left the Great Hall, he did not want to spend another moment next to Dumbledore. And he had to inform his wayward students about the Tournament.

Alexander and the rest of the Covenant were sitting in their ships mess hall, chatting merrily amongst themselves and the few teachers that had joined them in their own festivity. The Covenant celebrated their successful arrival at Hogwarts after that difficult and draining spell, their teachers simply thought their students liked to unwind a bit more now that they are not at Durmstrang anymore. When Karkaroff came and shared the news about Dumbledore's speech and the other students reactions to it, most Durmstrang students couldn't help but laugh. They already knew their most likely champion, it was the first thing Alex told them before they started eating. No one really opposed this, some would still put their names in the goblet just for show, but everyone knew that their champion could only be one man and they all would support him unconditionally. They would show their unity here at Hogwarts, no one could stop the Covenant once all members stood side by side to fight together. Dumbledore would be in for quite a number of surprises should he underestimate them.

A\N: Oh well, another chapter done. I hope this doesn't disappoint, I guess many readers greatly anticipated the arrival at Hogwarts. I also know that Dumbles seemed to be a bit too submissive towards Alex, but believe me the old man has many more plans and is sure he will succeed.

Also about the interactions of the Hogwarts students. Yeah I have added three more important OCs to the story now. Rose Potter, but everyone knew she would be part of the story at one point. And yes Ron doesn't like Rose, no new golden trio with Rose as replacement for Harry. Ron's dislike has reasons, I will explain them in one of the next chapters. And the other two OCs, the Black siblings Antares and Cassiopeia. The fourth year Gryffindor boy and his fifth year Slytherin sister. Both will play their roles and become important characters in the near future.

As I had promised before I have also added some short infos to my OCs to my profile, nothing fancy, just some basic things to make it easier to remember certain things about a character like age and family relations.

As usual please leave a Review

Chapter 17: Enmity

The next morning arrived quickly, the first whole day at Hogwarts for Alex and the Durmstrang delegation. It was the day the three champions for the schools would be chosen and Alex had already prepared his plans for this day. A champion they wanted and Alex would give them a true champion. Victor would serve this purpose quite well, oh yes by the end of this year the other schools champions would look like fools compared to Durmstrang's competitor.

Their day had for once started without their usual routine, there were things to discuss this day, so they would resume their physical training schedule the next day and most were still slightly worn out from the spell they had used the day before and a day rest would do them all some good. At the moment they all sat together for their breakfast, well only the students. Karkaroff and the rest of the adults were eating in a separate room, the High Masters futile attempt to regain some feeling of superiority. This way the students would have to come to them if they needed help or anything. To Alex this was just a pathetic act by a man that would soon find out that all the power he once held was long gone.

"Okay everyone. Once you all are finished we will march up to that castle with the whole group. I know only few of you will enter your names for the tournament, but we will show them that no matter what all of us fully support our champion." Many nodded at Alex words, they would follow any orders without a doubt, so far he had not lead them astray.

"Also from now on I will not permit that anyone walks around alone. We are in possibly enemy territory. Yes we have allies here, but we have a great many more enemies that will use any sign of weakness to gain an advantage on us. We will split up into teams of five, so always stay with your team. Each team will be given assignments during our stay that will improve our situation. We will not go down here, we will show our strength." All were paying rapt attention now, even Victor looked mildly concerned, though he usually tried to not show any such reactions.

"The first team will be Victor and the other four seventh years that will enter their names for the tournament. Your group will only have the sole purpose to train for the different tasks. No matter who of

you is chosen the others will support the Champion so we will win this whole competition. Victor, you will lead that team, you will know best what to do." Victor gave a curt nod before he returned his attention back to his food.

"Next teams two, three, four and five will have the job to scout the school and the entire surrounding area. Elena, you will be in charge of that job. I want detailed maps of every floor of that castle, every room, every corridor and secret passage. I want to know about everything on the school grounds and whatever area you see as interesting for our safety." Elena looked pensive for a moment before she answered him.

"Do you want us to keep an eye on the forest as well?" Alex pondered his sisters question for some moments.

"Not yet. I doubt that we need anything from there, at least for now. Concentrate on the school and the grounds first. Maybe that village as well. Those areas will be the places were the people here spent the most of their time. If we have time to spare we will have a look at the forest." The answer seemed satisfactory for Elena, at least she didn't ask any further questions.

Alex continued after a brief moment of thinking. "Okay teams six through nine will act as our eyes and ears. You will be responsible to find any possible threat to us and it will be your job to find solutions on how to deal with these threats. Do not act without my approval unless you deem it necessary to annihilate an immediate threat to our group here. Benedikt, you will be in charge of all that. Do not fuck this up. I warn all of you, don't let yourselves be provoked without reason. Especially from those students with the red ties. Judging by their sneers yesterday they must be Dumbledore's little pet brigade." Many of the other students in the room scowled as they remembered the way those red Hogwarts kids had looked at them. They would most likely not form any friendships with those children any time in the future.

"And that leaves us with the last group and yes dear Lilith you are in that group with me..." He smirked when he saw the look she gave him. "... Our group will have only one purpose. We will make Dumbledore's life hell while we are here. Whatever he tries to pull, we counteract it. Whatever he tries to convince the people of, we will show the world the truth. If the old man tries to mess with us he will

regret that very soon, that I promise." Many students around him chuckled at that. No one here held any positive feelings about Dumbledore. "I will pass around the list with the groups now. Remember always stay with your group no matter what. United we stand, divided we fall. Unity is our strength and will use that to dictate how Dumbledore's game will play out."

Not thirty minutes later all Durmstrang students were on their way towards the castle. This time they chose a less orderly formation as they walked. The independent teams were now walking closely together, talking in hushed voices about what they should do once their morning visit to the castle was over. Alex walked up ahead, Lilith on his arm, the rest of his group close behind them as they entered the hall where the Goblet of Fire stood in all its glory. Many students were standing in the hall, watching who enters his name into the Goblet with great interest. Occasionally they could see a Hogwarts professor standing among the students, watching as well.

Victor and his group quickly approached the Goblet, a small slip of paper in their hands as they entered their names one after another, just to leave the castle again without sparing any of the bystanders even the slightest glance. The rest of the Durmstrang students also left the hall, they no longer had any reason to stay in the crowded place and each of the teams had their own jobs to do now. Only Alex group remained a bit longer, but only because Alex could see Dumbledore approach him with his usual friendly mask in place.

"Good morning to you Mr Grindelwald, Ms Falkenstein." As it seemed Dumbledore had learned from the day before and payed better attention to the people next to Alex or else he would have most likely ignored Alex fiancée. "Are you not going to enter your name for the tournament? The Goblet will only remain here for a few more hours."

"Good morning, headmaster. I have no intention to join your little competition here, I already have more fame then I like and money will never be an issue for all my life. I am simply here to, how did you call it... ah yes learn a bit more about foreign cultures and how you teach your students. I must admit it got me quite curious how you fill an entire year with the little variety in subjects that you have here." Alex smirked condescendingly at the old wizard, knowing full well what reaction his words would cause from the students around him, if they would catch the underlying meaning. Apparently Dumbledore

did not catch that meaning or he simply ignored it. The man was quite proficient in blocking out things he did not want to struggle with.

"Excellent. Though I am a bit disappointed that you will not enter the Tournament I am delighted to know that you have such a great interest in learning about how things could have been for you, had you chosen to come here instead of Durmstrang like I had offered you numerous times." A bit of anger welled up inside of Alex mind when he heard these words, Dumbledore had never offered, he had demanded it. Just like he had demanded that Alex parents should hand over their son because the great Albus Dumbledore had doubts that they could properly raise their son to be a light wizard. Alex quickly hid his anger with a hollow smile. Their little conversation had already drawn the attention of many students around them, when Dumbledore revealed that he had originally wanted Alex at his school some of them even gasped in shock, something that caused Liliths lips to twitch in amusement.

"Well I am here to learn about our differences, one never stops to learn, Mr Dumbledore. When we start denying ourselves to learn certain things we only impair our own development. No knowledge should be shunned." Alex narrowed his eyes at the man before him as he finished his statement. Even the dumbest first year should have understand what he just said.

"But certainly even you must understand that there are certain things that are simply too dangerous, to foul and corrupting to learn. Not all knowledge is meant to do good and will only corrupt the mind of the person who learns it." At this Alex laughed loudly at the man, finally drawing the attention of every single person in the hall.

"Knowledge does not corrupt, Mr Dumbledore. Power does. And we are both powerful in our own rights. Does that mean that we are both corrupted? Some knowledge simply offers a quicker way to power, but in the end all will result in the same. The weak minded fall, the strong survive." Dumbledore looked quite shocked at Alex exclamation, in particular when he insinuated that they are both corrupted. No one has ever accused Albus Dumbledore of such a thing, especially not in front of so many students. "Well Mr Dumbledore I am sure you still have duties to attend to, I surely do. So I bid you farewell, we will see each other this evening when the Champions are chosen." With a superior and smug smirk Alex left the man in his stupor. Lilith shared Alex smirk, she had really

enjoyed watching this. Dumbledore had been a thorn in the side of her home country ever since the war against the old Grindelwald had ended. Seeing Dumbledore in such a position as he is in now was quite pleasing. She would have to send this memory home to her father so he could watch it in a pensive, he would surely enjoy it even more than she does right now.

But Alex mood was still at a low point after this. Talking to Dumbledore was surely not on his list for enjoyable morning activities. He knew the old man would try to talk to him at any given chance, he would try to convince him of the greatness of the Light and how all dark should be shunned and distrusted. Well at least he could embarrass the old man in front of his own students, yes their faces had been priceless. This lightened his mood a bit. At least until he stepped out of the hall just to be stopped by the next idiot who didn't know his place.

"Mr Grindelwald, a moment of your time." Well at least the guy had some manners, though he had an air of arrogance around him that suggested differently at first glance.

Alex sighed as he turned to the newcomer and the two goons that walked slightly behind him. "Yes, what can I do for you, Mr...?"

"Malfoy, Draco Malfoy. I wanted to congratulate you for your success in showing just what kind of fool Dumbledore really is. On behalf of house Slytherin I wish to invite you and your fellow students to sit with us at our table this evening when the champions are chosen." He extended a hand to Alex, a haughty smirk on his face.

Alex pondered this for a moment before he shook the boys hand. He knew the name Malfoy. He had looked up all known Death Eaters that were still alive after the attack on his mother. He wanted to know which persons to be wary of. And Malfoy was most definitely one of those fellows. He bought his way out of prison, well better than Karkaroff who betrayed his comrades in the blink of an eye to escape incarceration. "We will consider it. But let me give you a fair warning, Mr Malfoy. Should either you or your father be involved in the recent events with Death Eaters you will curse the day you were born into this world." Alex voice grew cold at the end of his warning, his gaze boring into the younger boys eyes, his face void of any amusement.

"My... fa..father had nothing to do with that." Draco finally managed to stutter out. The Grindelwald heir exuded an aura that simply screamed danger for anyone who was on his list and Draco knew for sure he wouldn't want to be on that list. His goons, Crabbe and Goyle stared at Alex in awe. Never before had anyone caused Draco to look so frightened.

"Then keep it that way and we will get along just fine. Have a nice day Mr Malfoy." Alex stalked off, not looking back. It took Draco some moments to regain his composure before he hurried back inside the castle.

Elena and her group had quickly left the crowded hall after Victor had entered his name for the Tournament. While the other three groups under her command were roaming the castle to look around and get a basic idea how hard their job would be to get maps of this place, her own team went back outside. To her the gathering of students here was quite ... suffocating. She was not afraid of crowds or any such thing, but she knew when a room was just too full. But inadvertently this caused a confrontation that Elena wished to avoid for some more time. Mostly just because she wished to not kill someone on the first day of their stay. But now they came face to face with a small group of the French delegation, lead by Fleur Delacour.

The French stopped only a few feet away from Elena, looking curiously at the Veela. Especially Fleur, though her staring remained somewhat unreadable. "Delacour. What do you want?" Elena hissed at Fleur, her gaze filled so much with hate that it shocked some of the French students, causing them to take a step back from her.

"My my and I had believed you would be glad to finally see some family, dear cousin." Fleur now looked haughtily at Elena, not missing the girls hand slowly twitching towards her wand.

"You are no family of mine, Delacour. Get the hell lost before I act against my better judgment and treat you the way someone like you deserves."

"Ah yes, you have decided to call the people that murdered your mother and sister family now. I almost forgot. The Dupont part of the family has always been known for their strange choices when it

comes to the people they associate with." That jab just angered Elena more, it took the utmost self control on her part not to transform and rip the part Veela before her to shreds.

"Don't you dare talk about my family like that. The Grindelwalds have taken me in and cared for me when you arrogant vermin ignored and abandoned me. They are my family in everything but blood. You can't even remotely compare to them. You always just cared for yourselves, because of your lies and deception our grandmother decided to abandon her real daughter for the bastard child. You are not even worthy of your Veela heritage. Your family only came to be because of a mistake, a lapse in judgment on our grandmothers side."

"How dare you. Grandmother abandoned you because of the unspeakable things your mother has done. She loved both her children before your mother brought shame upon the family. And now you do the same, consorting with those murdering dark wizards. To think that my mother had tried to find you for so long to take you in after what had happened to your family. To me it seems you had no problems finding yourself a new home." Fleur was now equally enraged like her cousin, for her it was even harder to control the animalistic side of the Veela nature. As a part Veela she wouldn't be able to fully transform, but at the same time she had less control about her temper once the Veela instincts got the better of her.

The other students around them, both French and the Durmstrang students watched the two girls with slight fear of what might happen. Most uninvolved Hogwarts students that had been near had ran away from the scene almost instantly when the yelling started.

"Your bitch of a mother taking me in? Do you really take me for a fool. She has never done anything more then shun us and treat us with disgust. Stop your lies, they won't gain you anything. You and your abominable family would have never treated me normal, I would have never been treated with the same respect as the Grindelwalds show me."

"Oh yes your oh so great Grindelwalds. What did you do to gain yourself the favor of such a dark family? Have you sold out your mother and sister to them to be slaughtered like some people think you did? Or have you simply become the little fuck toy of the Grindelwald heir, so he can have some fun while he dooms us all."

Fleurs hate filled words finally caused Elena to lose all self control for some moments. Suddenly she partly transformed, two large white wings shot out of her back, ripping the back of her uniform, while her face got slightly bird like features. But before she could fully transform Elena managed to regain some of her composure, forcing the urge to transform back down, but not enough to will her wings to disappear.

"How dare you even suggest such a thing. Alex loves me like a sibling and I love him... the same way, he would never do such an immoral thing to me. He wants me to be his sister and I will be just that. He is a true gentleman, but apparently you don't know any such men. Maybe you like to associate with scum, but I would never..."

"Your actions speak for themselves, you are just a whore, nothing more. My mother was wrong you should have been put down just like your mother..." Before Fleur could finish her sentence she suddenly felt a wand pressed at the side of her throat.

"Finish that sentence and you will find out what happens when you get hit by a cutting curse at this distance. I won't have you insult my friend and her family like this." Fleur slightly turned her head to see who stood behind her. All she could see was the angry face of Victor Krum and the rest of the French students that were with her in equal positions with wands near their throats so they could not interfere. "You guys better bring Elena back to the ship so she can calm down. We will take care of these vile people."

Elena's team stepped closer to the still partly transformed Veela. Elena stood motionless, taking deep breaths to calm herself. Without resistance she let herself be lead towards the lake, not looking back. She feared that she would lose even the last of her control permanently should she see her cousin at the moment. When Elena and her group were out of hearing range Victor pushed Fleur forward, causing her to trip and fall to the ground.

"You have made some powerful enemies today, Delacour. Pray that you are not chosen as your school's champion or else I will destroy you during this Tournament." Victor's voice was dark and menacing, his gaze promised pain should his words not be followed. "Release the French, we are leaving." Before he left Victor spat at the ground next to Fleur, then he quickly stalked down towards the lake himself.

He would destroy some dummies in their training room to cool of. No one wrongs the friends of Victor Krum without angering the Bulgarian and that French girl just pissed him of to no end.

At Durmstrang the day went by much calmer. It was just past lunch in a free period when Ivanna walked out on the training ground, closely followed by her aide Arvid. "Come on, lazy. No time to waste. I want to start training before our next lesson starts. We only got one hour anyway."

"Geez talk about obsession. Master Grindelwald and the others are barely gone a day and you already start going crazy." Arvid's sarcastic remark gained him a blasting curse that he barely managed to dodge. "Alright alright. Calm down, Ivanna."

"I have barely one year to improve. I can't let this chance pass by unused. I will get stronger and proof my worth to Alex and the Covenant." Her eyes shining with determination Ivanna switched into a combat stance, transforming her bracelet into a magnificent staff with the blood jewel on top of it. Her wand disappeared in the staff, making the staff a complete replacement as her focus for a battle.

"Well if you are so sure..." Arvid sighed, he had no intention to get his ass kicked by Ivanna, but there was no way for him to escape this situation.

"I am sure. Next time I won't be left behind, next time I will be strong enough that they all will gladly take me along into hostile territory." Before she had spoken the last words she had already twirled the staff and sent a large barrage of curses towards Arvid, most bounced of his shield, some didn't even hit.

"As I understood it they left you here because he entrusted the school to you..." He had to stop mid sentence and jump to the side as a few curses came his way that would have been too powerful to block properly. "Hey watch it. I really like my life, no need to end it."

"Stop whining, Arvid. Come on attack me, give me a challenge. Don't hold..."

"Ivanna! Ivanna." Both Ivanna and Arvid stopped and looked to the side to see Rebecca running in their direction. The blond girl

seemed to be out of breath as she reached them. "Phew, I finally found you. We have a problem."

Ivanna sighed, pinching the bridge of her nose. "What happened, Rebecca? I don't want the school to burn down the first day I'm in charge, so tell me."

"Well there had been an accident in the potions lab during the first years lesson... one of them somehow... blew up the room. Half of the class is in medical care right now."

"And what do you expect me to do about it? Go bug Karkaroffs deputy, it is his job after all." Ivanna looked really annoyed. She already knew where this would lead. The deputy was a very lazy man and would most likely try to defer the responsibilities to someone else.

"Well he said it was caused by a Covenant member so the punishment of the initiator of the incident would be our problem." Arvid laughed when he heard that sad excuse from the deputy.

"That man is nuts. All students are Covenant members..." Arvid stopped laughing when he saw Ivanna glare at him.

"Alright, who caused the incident, Rebecca?"

"Oh it was your favorite little first year. You know the one who usually stalks you all day." Rebecca couldn't help but giggle at the exasperated look on Ivanna's face and Arvid simply chuckled.

"Oh not again. ASTRIS... oh when I get my hands on that troublemaker." Ivanna stalked off in the general direction of the schools hospital to find the troublesome little Nymph that had bugged her for weeks now. Arvid and Rebecca almost felt sorry for the young girl, well almost. Astris was a notorious firebrand.

To Alex this day had already become far too troublesome. When he returned to the ship was informed about what had happened to Elena earlier. Her team had succeeded in getting her back to the ship and dosing her with enough calming draughts that she could fully suppress her transformation. But that didn't mean that the young Veela wasn't pissed off any more. In fact she was still so angry that Alex ordered her to stay on board of the ship that evening,

it wouldn't be good to have her get worked up even more by seeing Fleur. Currently she would most likely try to kill the French girl. Elena was not happy about that, but she knew it was for the best. Her team would remain on the ship until Elena had calmed down enough to be seen outside without causing a homicide.

Victor and his team were in the training room when Alex found them. "Victor, how is the training coming along?" Alex walked over to the bench where the Bulgarian had sat down for a small break. Victor was sweating profusely after his training, most of his team seemed to be even worse off and slowly dragged themselves towards the showers.

"Fine. I needed to blow some steam and probably went over board." He used a towel to clean his face of the sweat before it got into his eyes.

"Yes, I heard about the incident. Thank you for helping my sister. I really appreciate it." Alex gave Victor a friendly clap on the shoulder, gaining a grunt in response from the older boy.

"Elena is a friend. A real friend and I don't take kindly to anyone messing with my friends. I would do that for any friend of mine. That French bitch and her group of daft wankers had it coming. They would have deserved more than just the scare they got... but it would have caused problems if we had sent them to hospital in a matchbox. I will crush the French in this tournament though. There will be no holding back."

"Delacour will be a problem during this year, champion or not. Elena has some serious business with her and her family. This won't be the last time that they clash. If you can keep an eye out for any trouble on that front." Victor nodded and stood up to head to the showers himself, leaving Alex alone in that room. "I really hoped some of her problems would be solved by giving her a real family... was I wrong? Apparently this problem with the Delacour family can only be solved by bloodshed... I hope not." Alex murmured to himself as he went back to his room.

A knock on the door informed Albus Dumbledore that his visitor had arrived to his office. After a short invitation the door opened and James Potter entered the room. "Ah James, my boy, come have a seat."

"Thank you, professor. Why did you want to see me? Is there any problem the aurors should be informed about?"

"You certainly have heard about the incident earlier between the Beauxbatons and Durmstrang delegations. I wanted to ask why none of the aurors had interfered before it had gone that far. Surely there must have been one of your men present to witness this situation."

"Yes, professor. I had indeed been with two aurors at the scene, but we decided not to interfere. The situation was apparently a family problem between Ms Grindelwald and Ms Delacour. We know nothing about the family relationship between those two, but as long as there had been no real fighting the aurors were not permitted to interfere. But I must say I am impressed how the Durmstrang students stand up for each other. That second group came out of nowhere, saw the situation and decided it to their favor before they left without causing anyone harm." James words only caused the old wizard in front of him to shake his head sadly.

"The girls are cousins, James. Their mothers are half-siblings. I had once the pleasure to talk to Mrs Delacour a few years ago. The contact between the two families had been strained to say the least. There had been quarrels that could not be resolved between Mrs Delacour and Mrs Dupont because of the unfortunate death of Mrs Dupont. She and her oldest daughter had been killed by a group of people that were rumored to be associates of the Grindelwald family." This surprised James greatly, he was at loss for words at that revelation. To him it made no sense, why would that girl be with the Grindelwald, an adopted child of theirs on top of that, when the Grindelwalds had a hand in her old families deaths, it made no sense at all.

"I had expected the relationship between these two to be icy at the beginning, but apparently both children would rather fight each other then talk. I must ask you to keep an eye out for those two. They should never meet unsupervised, else I fear we will have a death during this year that would overshadow this event. Not to mention what reactions this could cause politically. The Grindelwalds are obviously very protective of each other, harm to Ms Grindelwald would cause great problems in the ICW. Same goes for Ms Delacour, her father is next in line to be minister in France in the

elections in November, should his daughter be hurt here in such an incident the consequences in the ICW would be tremendous."

"I will instruct my men to keep an eye on those two. But shouldn't we get down to the Great Hall, professor? It is about time for the ceremony. Everyone is already giddy to know who the champions will be." Dumbledore laughed grandfatherly at the change of topic. He too wanted to know who would represent the schools. Sadly Alexander would not compete, but this would also give him some more chances to talk to him without getting in trouble about influencing another schools champion. He had Alexander here at his school and he would use this chance.

"Yes, James. Let us go down now, no need to let the students wait longer then necessary." Both men stood up and made their way towards the Great Hall. The place would surely be already buzzing with chatter in anticipation of the ceremony.

As expected the great hall of Hogwarts was filled to the last place, students from all three schools present to watch the choosing of the three champions. The first thing that Albus Dumbledore saw when he entered the Hall shocked him quite a bit. All present Durmstrang students were sitting at the Slytherin table, on one side he was pleased to see that they had come to sit in the Great Hall, but their choice where to sit was less then ideal for his plans. Then he saw that the number of Durmstrang students was lower then expected. Only about half of the students had come. All of Elena's teams had decided to stay on the ship with their leader, all in all twenty out of the fifty Durmstrang students were absent for the ceremony.

Then the Goblet of Fire was brought into the Hall from the Antechamber where it was stored since the time to enter the names was up. Placed in front of the head table of the Great Hall the Goblet was the center of all attention. Its flames flaring lazily.

"The time has come to chose our champions for the tournament. Many of you have entered your names, some successful and all those who tried to ignore the age restriction without success. But now it is time to find us three champions to represent their schools. So let the ceremony begin and let the Goblet choose the worthiest students for the Triwizard Tournament." Most students clapped, but none of those sat at the Slytherin table. Both Slytherins and

Durmstrang students cared little about Dumbledore's petty words. The Gryffindors were those who clapped the most, closely followed by the Hufflepuffs. Alex could only snort when he saw them. Blind sheep following Dumbledores every word. He could tell them that they would die in the next five minutes and they would clap. The table on the right side of the Hall where the Ravenclaw and Beauxbatons students sat clapped only a little, enough to be courteous, but not enough to convince anyone that they cared for the old mans words all that much.

Dumbledore stood in front of the Goblet, waiting for the first slip of paper to come out and announce the first champion. And there was no need to wait long. The fire flared up and a small slip of paper flew out of the flames, seemingly unaffected by the fire. With agility unexpected for a man of his age Dumbledore caught the paper and read it out loud. The Hall went deadly quiet when they saw him open the paper, everyone waiting for the first champion.

"The Champion for Beauxbatons Academy of Magic is Fleur Delacour." Most students clapped politely for the French girl as she stood up and walked towards Dumbledore before she was instructed to wait in the antechamber until all champions are chosen. Again no one at the Slytherin table clapped. The Slytherins just didn't care and the Durmstrang students tried to kill Fleur with their deadly glares. When the French girl looked over to the table she saw Alex and glared at him, which caused Alex to chuckle in amusement.

"That girl must be a total nutcase. First she starts a fight with Elena and now she glares at you. She is really begging to get hurt." Benedikt leaned over to Alex not hiding his own amusement at the behavior of the Beauxbatons champion.

"She will learn her place Benedikt, she will learn." Alex looked around, most of his fellow students chuckled in anticipation of what would happen to that girl. Even most of the surrounding Slytherin students smirked at hearing the young Grindelwald's words.

Oblivious to the words spoken at the Slytherin table Dumbledore continued in front of the tables, waiting for the next paper. Again the fire in the Goblet flared up before a slip of paper came out and sailed directly into the old wizards hand.

"The Champion for the Durmstrang Institute is Victor Krum." The Slytherin table erupted into loud cheers and clapping, most other students in the Great Hall soon joined in with the exception of the French students and some of the Gryffindors who were completely convinced that Krum was a dark wizard just like the rest of the Durmstrang students. But Victor's fame as Quidditch player caused most others at Gryffindor table to clap for the Bulgarian.

Victor stood up slowly and walked up front, but he wasn't alone. Alex followed him closely, a hand on Victor's shoulder. Many people watched that with interest until Dumbledore asked the question that most of them had at the moment. "Mr Grindelwald, what are you doing? Only Mr Krum was chosen as Champion."

"The Grindelwald family acts as sponsor for the Durmstrang champion, henceforth it is my right and duty to stand by Victor's side. In fact you will not be allowed to talk to him about the Tournament without me present to witness it as well." Alex and Victor both sported a smug smirk as they passed the old man and entered the antechamber.

The chamber was relatively small in comparison to the hall, only a few chairs and a large fireplace were in the room. In front of the fireplace stood Fleur Delacour, looking pensively into the flames before she realized she was no longer alone.

"What are you two doing here? Only one of you dark bastards can be champion." She sneered at Alex and Victor. Victor walked up to her, stopping only a few inches in front of her.

"I told you I will destroy you during this tournament. Better be prepared for a world of pain, Delacour." Alex had joined them by now and pulled Victor back with a hand on his shoulder.

"Calm down Victor. You get your chance. And you better learn some manners, Delacour. Those without often find out that their lives will end sooner than they would like." Alex looked at her coldly, his face mostly impassive, but his eyes held many unspoken promises of pain.

"Big words from a murderer. You may have broken my cousin to make her your obedient slave, but I will not be intimidated by you or your goons." Fleur glared at him, but only got a condescending

smile in return. Then Alex and Victor settled down in two chairs at the other end of the room, talking in hushed voices. Not that Fleur would have understood a single word as the other spoke Russian so no one could listen in to their conversation.

Outside in the Great Hall the students were still waiting for the third and final champion, the Hogwarts champion. "Have you seen how those dark wizards stalk around like they own the place. I can't believe that professor Dumbledore just allows them to continue like this." Ron raved on about what he disliked about the Durmstrang students. It has been his favorite topic since they had seen the Durmstrang delegation enter their names into the Goblet. To him those foreign students simply stood for all those things he was taught to resent and he truly resented them by now.

"Calm down, Ron. They are a bit arrogant, but that will lessen with time. Soon they will start acting normal once they see that it won't do them any good to act like this while they are at our school." Antares tried to get his friend to shut up without having to say it outright, but to little avail so far.

"He is right, Ron. Your bickering won't help you. Just keep an eye on them and be cautious. Something tells me that angering them would be unwise. Have you heard about the clash between the Beauxbatons and Durmstrang students this morning?" Hermione looked around, but apparently none of the other students had been present when the incident occurred. Most of them had been watching the Goblet to see who tries to enter the tournament.

"Probably an attempt of the dark wizards to frighten their competition to not participate in the Tournament. Would be so just like them to use underhanded methods to gain an advantage." Ron scoffed, but was mostly ignored by the others by now.

"That is wrong, Ron." Everyone looked astounded towards Rose, usually the timid girl wouldn't try to talk to Ron in fear he would try to bite her head off. And Ron now glared at her, but she continued none the less. "I was there talking with my father when it happened. That French champion and Grindelwalds sister had a spat. It was pretty intense, some sort of family issue between those two. Both looked like they would start fighting the next given moment, but the fight never came when Krum interfered and stopped the French before they could even draw their wands."

"You mean there were aurors and no one interfered?" Antares asked incredulously.

"Dad said it was a personal issue for them and they wouldn't interfere unless they would really start a fight." At this Rose looked towards the head table to see her father sitting with some of the teachers, looking intently at Dumbledore as he caught another slip of paper.

"And finally the Champion for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is Cedric Diggory." A seventh year Hufflepuff stood up and walked to the front while his fellow housemates went absolutely crazy that their house had the champion for Hogwarts.

"Man I can't believe it. Of all people a Puff..." Ron looked disappointed. Some of their housemates had entered their names, but not it wouldn't be a Gryffindor to gain the fame and honor for Hogwarts, no it had to be a Hufflepuff.

"Better than a Slytherin, Ron. Just imagine their smug looks if it would have been one of them." Antares said jokingly, causing Ron to shudder at the thought alone. "But somehow I feel sorry for Cedric. Krum will use that French chick for target practice and the poor little Puff will be caught in the crossfire." Some Gryffindors who heard Antares' comment laughed at the thought.

In front of the tables Dumbledore continued with his speech undeterred by the voice level in the hall. Now that all champions had been chosen all students started talking about the three chosen. "Now that we have found our three champions I will say some final words about the Tournament. All three champions are supposed to prepare for their task on their own. Once chosen they stand on their own so please refrain from trying to aid them, it is against the rules. The first of the three tasks will be on 24th November. That will be..." But suddenly the Goblet flared again and spit out another slip of paper. Dumbledore quickly caught it and read the contents, a shocked look on his face. "Rose Potter." He said with undisguised surprise in his voice.

Suddenly all faces in the Hall were directed at the small Gryffindor fourth year, said girl sat at the far end of the table looking sickly pale. "Rose Potter please come here... you have been chosen as well."

But again the girl made no move towards Dumbledore, but simply fell backwards. Antares who sat next to her was barely able to catch her in time before her head would have hit the ground.

"I believe she has fainted, professor." Hearing Antares words the school nurse quickly jumped up from her place at the head table, from where she had watched the ceremony, and walked over to the unconscious Gryffindor girl, closely followed by James Potter. The entire hall was still quiet, all people watching the Gryffindor table.

"Is she alright, Poppy?" James looked at the nurse with concern for his daughters condition visible in his eyes.

"She is alright, James. She simply fainted from shock." She produced something from one of the many pockets of her clothing and held it under Rose nose, getting the girl to wake up only moments later.

"What happened?" Rose groaned lightly as she saw the concerned faces of her father and the school nurse hovering above her.

"You have fainted, Ms Potter. But you will be alright. Now go to the headmaster, I am sure some people are already getting impatient." James helped his daughter up and guided her to Dumbledore. Rose looked around seeing the faces of her fellow students. Some showed anger, others shock. No one understood why the small girls name had come out of the Goblet.

Dumbledore smiled grandfatherly at the girl, completely hiding his own worries about the situation. "Come Rose, let us go to the other champions, we will solve the questions there, no need to do it in front of everyone here." And so they quickly left for the antechamber, followed the Ministry officials that were here for the tournament as well as Karkaroff and the French headmistress Maxime who would all be the judges for the Tournament.

The atmosphere in the antechamber was tense. When Cedric entered the room he saw Krum and Grindelwald sitting on one side and Fleur Delacour on the opposite side of the room. Each trying to stare the other down. It was plain obvious that there was more than just rivalry between them, the hate and enmity was palpable. Cedric wisely decided to say nothing and keep out of that conflict. It would seem that taking either side would be a very bad choice.

Some minutes of intense silence later Dumbledore appeared with the other judges and a sickly pale Rose Potter. The presence of the young girl surprised all people in the room. "Headmaster why is Rose Potter with you?" Cedric who stood closest to the door was the first to ask the question that they all shared.

But instead of the headmaster it was one of the ministry officials, one Ludo Bagman who answered giddily. "As surprising as it may sound this is the fourth Triwizard Champion. Her name just came out of the Goblet moments after Mr Diggory had left the hall."

"What? This can't be, this is just a little girl." Fleur screeched in outrage. Alex and Victor remained silent, pensive looks on their faces.

"What is the meaning of this, Dumbly-dorr? Is this your attempt to prank us or something? I must say I am not amused by this." Headmistress Maxime looked angrily at Dumbledore.

"I can assure you this is not a joke. We don't know why the Goblet spat out a fourth name or how the girl managed to get her name into the Goblet in the first place but she will have to compete now. Once the name is chosen the champion will have to compete, it is an magical contract that has to be fulfilled." Bagman tried to diffuse the situation, but his attempt was weak and caused even more pandemonium.

"This is an outrage. We demand that our students be allowed to enter names into the Goblet until a second champion can be chosen for our schools as well." Karkaroff yelled at Bagman.

"I am afraid that won't be possible. The contract allows only one student per school. Apparently someone has entered Ms Potter under a new school. There won't be any more students joining this Tournament." Bagman tried to justify this situation, but only enrage Karkaroff even more.

"This will have consequences. Mark my words. This treachery will not go unpunished. This must be your doing, Dumbledore. That girl is the daughter of your protege, you use that little twit to gain yourself an advantage at all cost. You gave her the means to enter her name while you restricted all other from doing it." He pointed

angrily at the shaking girl that tried to hide behind the old headmaster, scared to death by the angry High Master from Durmstrang. "I have half a mind..." Before Karkaroff's rant could continue he was interrupted.

"Igor, shut the fuck up. Don't you dare disgrace our school any more by acting like the French." Alex yelled at Karkaroff, effectively shutting everyone in the room up. All stared at the young Grindelwald in astonishment at how he talked to the head of his school. Well all except Victor who still sat on his chair in the corner of the room watching the scene obviously amused. Alex walked over to Rose and placed his hands on her shoulders, scrutinizing her for a moment. "Can't you ignorant fools see how scared this girl is. She knew nothing about her name being entered into this Tournament, that much is obvious." Rose looked grateful at the Grindelwald heir while he gave her shoulders a small squeeze. "Rose, you haven't entered your name into the Goblet, have you?"

"No, sir. Even if I would have been of age I wouldn't have done it." Rose answered in a small but somewhat steady voice.

"There you have it. So all of you be so kind as to shut the fuck up and think about why someone has entered her name into this tournament." He looked over to Dumbledore, seeing the man watch him curiously. "I have my doubts that even you would be as irresponsible as this, Dumbledore. No you would know that this Tournament could possibly kill her and I hope you have enough common sense not to do something like this. Then ask yourselves who would have a gain from harming this girl. But be so kind to do this another day and get over with this meeting. This day has been long enough already and I would like to get out of this room and away from certain people." At this he looked condescendingly at Fleur, while he still had one hand on Rose's shoulder. The young girl seemed not as pale as before, somehow Alexander's presence and words calmed her.

"Yes, let us proceed. We will figure this out later. Alright, the first task for the Champions will be on the 24th November. You will not get any hints as to what the first task will be, but we advise you to properly train for this as it will test your strength, cunning and resilience. Also you will have to prepare yourselves on your own. Others are not permitted to interfere. Well all others but Mr Grindelwald. As Mr Krum's sponsor he is indeed allowed to aid Mr

Krum in his preparation. Those of you that wish for help should possibly find yourselves a sponsor then." Bagman was back to his cheery attitude.

With that the meeting ended. Alex and Victor quickly left the room, followed by a seriously pissed of Karkaroff. Some distance behind them were Maxime and her champion, both keeping their distance to the Durmstrang group, especially after seeing that all Durmstrang students had remained in the hall waiting for their fellow students. All other students, Hogwarts and Beauxbatons alike had already been sent to bed and complied to that order. The Durmstrang students wouldn't leave without their leader and champion. Alex was glad when they finally reached their ship, the day had been long, too long and too strenuous. And it was just the beginning of this all. There were still months they had to spend here before they could return home. This year would be troublesome.

AN: There goes this chapter.

I was a bit hesitant about adding the chapter like this, the fight between Fleur and Elena and all that, well I somehow had my doubts that people would like it that way, but in the end I decided not to change that incident because it is important to be that way for Elena's character development in the future.

I know Fleur is quite ooc in this chapter, but I needed her to act like this. It was meant to show the deep hatred Elena has for her former family and the animosity Fleur feels towards her cousin for going against her family. Their conflict will be a major topic for Elena and those around her during their stay at Hogwarts.

Ah yes the small part about Ivanna at Durmstrang. I will try to have such short glimpses about her and the school in most coming chapters. Arvid and Rebecca will not have much background story, in fact they will remain flat characters only there to support Ivanna and her part of the story. About the little Nymph Astris I am not so sure. Maybe I give her some more story and make some sort of sidekick for Ivanna or something like that. I still have to make that decision.

Yeah I know it is a bit lame that I chose the rather common champions, the three canonical + a Potter. Well Rose is not a replacement for Harry, she is not a girl-who-lived. To those people

the BWL has died many years ago and they have quite a heightened interest the sister of their savior.

And finally the first real interaction between Alex and Rose. Though he has seen her years before there has never been any real contact between those two former siblings. Their interaction and relationship will be... lets say major thorn in Dumbledores side in the near future.

And as always please leave a Review

Heya I'm back with yet another chapter to this story. The response to this story so far was really far beyond my expectations. 28 new Reviews since the last update, I am really happy about the input. Also by now my story is part of 23 C2s and has over two hundred Favs and almost three hundred Alerts, great thanks to all those who like my story.

Again I address here the recurring topic in the Reviews about the pairing, I know many people had hoped for Elena and don't like Lilith. But that may be my fault, I might have made it unclear or something like that. Alex and Liliths betrothal was a decision made by their parents, at the time they learned about it they had no romantic relationship or anything like that for each other. They had to learn each other. In order to fulfill their duty as pureblood heirs and protect the traditions of their society. Arranged marriages are also a part of that society. Would Alex have asked his parents to adopt Elena hadn't they announced his betrothal the day before? Maybe, maybe not. He wanted to give Elena a family and at that moment that was only possible as her brother. And Elena always follows his lead, he wants to be her brother so she acts her part and she will become the sister she thinks he deserves. The relationship of Alex and Elena started with guilt, the relationship of Alex and Lilith started with duty. Where they end... god knows I haven't finished the entire storyline yet. I am sorry if that was unclear in the story, I try to avoid such situations where the reader cannot understand why something happens the way it does.

Though I also have to admit that I am a bit biased towards Lilith. As some small side information in my first rough draft there was no Alexander Grindelwald, but Lilith Grindelwald. Yes instead of Harry they had stolen his sister Rose. The idea of a strong female lead character was quite intriguing for some time, especially the way I had planned Harry to be. The meeting of the supposedly dark heiress of Gellert Grindelwald and the poster boy of the Light side, the boy that had been raised by his family as a crusader of the light to avenge his supposedly dead sister. Oh well in the end it only remained a rough draft. I dismissed the idea, because most fics where Harry plays only a secondary role to a OC usually tend to get ignored. Thus the idea and story of Alexander Grindelwald was born. I switched the roles of Alex and Lilith. Elena would have been there as well, as Liliths sister and the rivals for the pairing would have been Alexander and Victor. But alas it never came to be and people seem to like the way the story developed with a male lead character.

Also for better understanding in this story from now on. There are generally four languages spoken in this fic, though I will write all in English, simply because I can only read and write two of them. First French, between Fleur and her fellow students and headmistress. Second Russian, primary language at Durmstrang, the way Alex usually talks to Benedikt and the other Durmstrang students. Thirdly German, the secondary language at Durmstrang, the language Alex uses when he talks to Elena, Lilith and his family. And lastly of course English, the primary language they all use to communicate during the Tournament. I will try to always write which language is used by the characters to avoid confusions.

I babble to much, on with the story...

The Crimson Vanguard

Chapter 18: Emotions

Almost a week had already passed since the Durmstrang delegation had arrived at Hogwarts. Busy days for Alex and all the Covenant members. Even though classes had been laughably easy here compared to the standards set by the Durmstrang professors. The lessons they had to share with the Hogwarts students were seldom challenging, mostly due to the local teachers reluctance to challenge the foreign students. Classes like History were a complete laughingstock, the ghost teacher at Hogwarts was unable to keep any of the guest students in his class due to his boring and uninformative lessons, so Alex and the rest of his fellow students rather had a tutor from Durmstrang come to teach them, then wasting their time further with the Hogwarts teacher.

Outside of classes the Durmstrang students mostly kept to themselves so far, the growing enmity between them and the Beauxbatons delegation caused problems almost every time those two groups met. Most French students were supportive of their champion and were not happy to hear about the threats from the Durmstrang champion and his friends. But both groups were clever enough to keep Fleur and Elena as far from each other as humanly possible. The few times they actually saw each other the students feared that a battle would be almost inevitable.

It was early morning on the 5th November when Alex sat at the desk in his room planing the activities for this day. It was weekend, no classes to deal with, no homework to do. Two days to use to further his own plans. When he looked at the clock on the wall he saw that it was almost time to meet with the rest of his fellow students for the morning workout. Once they had resumed their physical training it had drawn the attention of many people from Hogwarts. Such training was uncommon at this school, a place where only a small group of students was training for a sport, namely Quidditch. The majority of the students did nothing, so seeing the foreigners do their workout and running along the shore of the lake was quite the sight for them.

Alex looked around after he had finished dressing. He heard a small groan from the bed he now shared with his fiancée, apparently Lilith had started to wake up. She could be quite the morning grouch on weekends, that much Alex had already learned in the short time they shared a room now. He walked over to the bed to see her still lying there, her hair ruffled, eyes closed with a small pout on her lips. She was still fighting against waking up, but Alex wouldn't let her sleep, she would have to do the training just like the rest of them. He smirked as he went down on one knee next to her and slowly bent over just brush his lips against hers. What he intended to be a small, almost chaste touch to wake her up become more heated when she suddenly slung her arms around his neck, drawing him closer as she kissed him back. Her eyes were still closed as she did it, when she finally woke up enough to register what was happening his face was still only inches from hers, an even wider smirk gracing his lips now as he saw the shock in her face.

"Morning, princess. With that reaction I should have started waking you up like this much earlier. I really like it." He laughed as she pushed him away, her face red like a tomato. She tried to grab something from the nightstand only to find that nothing was there. Alex had wisely placed her wand out of her immediate reach on the desk to avoid being cursed by her. "Your wand is over there, just for the general safety of the ship. Can't have you blowing holes into this fine vessel now, can we." He couldn't help but laugh again as a pillow missed his head by a few inches, Lilith now sitting upright in the bed, glaring at Alex.

"What did I tell you about trying anything while we share a bed? I am quite sure I emphasized the point that you are not allowed to..." She

ranted a bit, but Alex knew this never takes much time. Soon she would calm down again and be reasonable.

"Come on Lilith, I did not act against your rule, technically I was not in the bed. And as I remember it was you kissing me back, quite passionately I might add." The other pillow sailed across the room, much to Alex amusement.

"Be glad that I don't have my wand right now."

"Sure. Now you better get up, you got ten minutes before we start our training. You already slept long enough." Lilith groaned when she heard that, as much as she liked the training, she hated getting up early on weekends. At Durmstrang she usually skipped weekend training, but now with her and Alex sharing a room because of his scheming she had no excuse not to participate. "Don't be like that. It is 9 AM, we already start later on weekends so everyone can sleep in a bit. Up with you, I'll be waiting outside doing warmups with the others." He walked over to the door when he turned around one more time to see her finally out of bed, stretching like a cat. "Just for the protocol you are irresistibly cute when you pout, have I ever told you that?" He didn't wait for a reaction and quickly left the room, missing the blush on his fiancée's face.

Most Covenant member were already outside on the shore doing stretches and other exercises to warm up. Some were also sparring a bit, nothing serious, but entertaining enough for them. As usual there also was the crowd of students from Hogwarts watching them curiously. "Good morning, Lord Grindelwald." Benedikt exclaimed this loudly, doing a mock bow. Soon most of the other Covenant members copied this action, all of them taking some perverse pleasure from seeing the British students flinch whenever they feared that they were in the presence of a real dark lord. Alex was used to this behavior by now, he could only shake his head as his friends antics.

"Good morning, Benedikt, Elena. Looks like another nice day here. I thought the weather was supposed to be horrid in this country."

"Nah, the weather in England is horrible, we are in Scotland." Benedikt grinned at his friend before he continued with his exercise.

"Same island, Benedikt. Anyways I have plans for the next few days. I want to arrange a meeting with all our local supporters and the more open minded students here at Hogwarts. Time to raise our numbers and even the field a bit."

"Dumbledore with throw a fit should we start recruiting amongst his sheep. I really think he is already planning something, why else should he be act so strange in our presence." Elena looked at Alex curiously.

"Oh that question is easy to answer. He is too occupied at the moment to find out who tries to kill the daughter of his protege. With the first task in less then three weeks it is more important for him to find an answer to that question, then to bug us. Really convenient for us." Though Alex sometimes wondered himself who is foolish enough to enter that small girl into the tournament he couldn't help himself but feel a certain satisfaction that this had happened. It was really helpful even though he disliked that this could cost the life of a small girl. And this also made it obvious that there were more groups active at this school then just Dumbledore's lackeys and the Covenant.

"Lilith looks quite pissed, did you do something again, Alex?" Elena looked at him accusingly. His smirk made it clear that she was right, Alex was the cause of Liliths bad mood.

"Alright everyone, lets get going." Without giving Lilith a chance for a biting remark towards him Alex started jogging in a fast pace, one lap around the lake, at least one hour he could escape his fiancees wrath, should she really harbor any ill intent towards him.

Inside Hogwarts Cassiopeia Black sat at the Slytherin table, enjoying her breakfast while she silently watched the other students in the Great Hall. Ever since the champions had been chosen the student body of Hogwarts had become a lot dumber, at least Cassiopeia experienced things this way. Poor little Rose Potter became a shunned outcast, some students were especially cruel in their pranks and other methods of causing the young girl grieve that Cassiopeia really doubted that such children should be allowed to walk this halls in the first place.

The evening Rose name came out of the Goblet she became the nemesis of the Hufflepuff house, to them she was a fame obsessed

maniac that tried to steal the rightful place of their champion. Diggory himself did little to stop his housemates, though he never outright participated in any actions against the Gryffindor girl.

The Ravenclaw house was mostly impassive, they cared little about Rose. But there was a small group in that house that seemed to try to ruin the girl almost viciously. Said group was headed by fifth year who was actually Diggory's girlfriend, so there was no real question why she and her friends seemed to dislike Rose that much.

Cassiopeia's own house was not much better than the others. Well except that most Slytherins did not really need a reason to try and make the life of a Gryffindor miserable. Cassiopeia could only sigh when she saw her housemates sport those stupid badges that only had the single purpose to hurt the feelings of one little girl. Those kids really needed a hobby, lest they only get stupid ideas.

"Cousin, why don't you join all your fellow housemates and wear one of our wonderful badges. We must show our support for our real school champion, he must win for the school's honor." Draco really pushed his luck with his cousin lately. In the past she always preferred to simply curse Draco, but that changed when she got so annoyed that she started avoiding her house altogether. She really wondered why she put up with them again, solitude was so much more relaxing than putting up with idiots, bigots and prats.

"Why should I wear such a stupid badge, Draco. I am not a five year old you know. It is ridiculous and only shows how petty you are. Just because she has no interest in you you try to destroy one little girl. Quite pathetic if you ask me."

"What do you know. Just because you suddenly start to grace us with your presence once more you think you know everything." Draco scoffed at his cousin.

"No Draco I don't know everything. But I've known you since before you quit wetting your bed at age nine and I know that you are really bad at taking a rejection. You want to be treated a man, go ahead and act like one." Cassiopeia's remark caused some of the other students around her to snicker in amusement and Draco to just glare more at her. But now he wisely kept his mouth shut and sat down at the other end of the table, completely ignoring his cousin.

When Cassiopeia looked around the Hall she could see that someone caused quite a commotion near the entrance to the hall. There near the doors stood a group of Gryffindor students, headed by her brother and his redheaded sidekick Ron. And apparently they were doing just the same thing that most others liked to do at the moment. Picking on one little girl. She stood up and slowly walked over to see what was happening, but she could already hear most of the things that were said from afar. The redhead really had a problem with controlling his voice level.

"What not so great all of a sudden when everyone sees your true colors, ey Potter. Now when fame and all that crap is involved you suddenly try everything to stand in the spotlight. Of course my sister wasn't worth your time, but this, oh yes this is much better of course." Ron sneered at the small girl in front of him, no one of the so called noble Gryffindors doing anything against him. Even Antares stood a few feet away watching the scene silently.

Antares almost didn't realize that his sister suddenly stood next to him, looking at him coldly. "Not gonna do anything, brother? Where is your so called Gryffindor pride in protecting the weak?"

"What do you know about my house, Cassy. Don't try to understand things you know nothing about." Antares glared at his sister.

"I know what I see. And I see a group of pathetic, jealous children ganging up on one girl to feel strong. I would laugh at you if this wasn't such a sad display of missing manners. Dad would be appalled."

"You mean as appalled as he was when he found out you became a stinking snake?" Antares comeback was weak and he knew it. His sister only looked at him with a sad smile.

"So you have become another blind bigot, you are not better then cousin Draco. In fact he is better then you, he at least does not deny his nature and hide it under the pretense of fighting for the Light. It's days like this that I truly wonder why I have ever called you brother. Do yourself a favor and grow yourself a spine. You only bring shame to our family." Shaking her head Cassiopeia walked away from the scene. She felt bad for Rose, but even she couldn't go alone against such a big group of Gryffindors. She only saw the poor girl run out of the castle, away from her idiotic housemates. For some moments

Cassiopeia wondered why there was no sign of the aurors, James Potter should be somewhere around the school, but apparently these children made sure he wasn't anywhere near when they went against his daughter.

Albus Dumbledore stood in his office in front of the fire place, the flames flaring green as the head of woman floated in fire, a floo call that was coming at an inconvenient time for him. For the third time since the spat between Fleur and Elena, Albus had to talk to Fleur's mother. The half veela was incensed when her daughter wrote her a letter about the near fight she had with her cousin.

"And I can only repeat myself, Mrs Delacour, as things are right now it would be not advisable for you to try and meet your niece. She nearly went berserk when she was confronted with your daughter, but her hate for you seems to be even greater judging by her words."

"Still there must be some way. I simply cannot accept that all what is left of my sister in this world is so hostile towards her real family. I will talk to her, headmaster. I will find a way to resolve this mess. I lost all chance to reconcile with Brigitte but I won't make the same mistake with her daughter." Albus groaned exasperated, this woman was far too stubborn. He had no time to keep an eye on her as well, not now, not so close to the first task. He still had to find out who entered Rose into the tournament, there was no room for another problem at the moment.

"You will get a chance to talk to Ms Grindelwald, but not now. I have told you before she needs some time to cool down. Let her get acclimated to being around family, once she is able to at least see your daughter without trying to attack her, then you can talk to her. But that time is not yet. Wait for some months, your niece will be here until July, there is no need to be hasty." Albus tried to sound appeasing, but his frustration must have at least shown in his face, judging by the scowl he got from Appolline Delacour.

"As you wish, I will wait. But not for long." With that the stern woman cut the floo connection. Albus could only sigh, at least one problem had been resolved for the moment.

"This stupid lake is bigger then we had thought. Why the heck did you want to run an entire lap around it today?" Lilith groaned loudly

as their entire group slowly jogged the last few hundred meters back to their ship.

"At least it was fun, pushing your limits once in a while is good for you, Lilith." Alex was next to her, slowing down a bit until he was merely walking. "And it is not like we have much else to do at the moment. We still have no clue about the first task, Dumbledore is docile and that French bitch keeps her distance from us. Perfectly peaceful. At least we can train to our hearts content."

"Only you enjoy running in circles, I know better ways to spend my time, Alex." Lilith had also slowed down, as have the others of their team as well as Benedikt and his group. While the rest had almost reached their starting point by now, Alex and the rest were walking slowly towards the ship along the shoreline, passing the farthest corner of the forest. "But you talked about plans when we were in our room, so what have you planned now?"

"We will rally our supporters here at this school. Even though it means exposing the families that support our cause to Dumbledore it will be worth it. And I am sure those people will be glad that the hiding is over. I also want to use this chance to recruit some new allies among the students of this school. With this absurd house system they have divided their students, there are so many splinter factions even among the houses. It will be easy to sway a good number of those kids to join our cause." Alex showed a predatory grin as he said that. "We have fought hard to reach unity and abolish those facilities that were used to spur on rivalry. Those children will be very susceptible to our agenda, they yearn for the same unity we have."

"Dumbledore will be so pissed at those who join us, he will most likely kick them out of this school, Alex. What good would us do that?" Benedikt looked at his friend with growing curiosity.

"Let him expel them, they will switch schools and come to Durmstrang. It is a win win situation for us. We gain new supporters and Dumbledore loses more and more of his future puppets. We can only gain here, but the old man can lose everything. Just what would the people think of him if suddenly the students of the leader of the light start succumbing to the darkness and joining the Covenant. The press will have a field day." Alex and Benedikt laughed when they imagined the headlines, especially in that

newspaper they have here. The Daily Prophet was most renown for its tendencies to embellish everything to a ridiculous level.

"Oh yeah... so much fun..." The sarcasm in Liliths voice was unmistakeable. "Did you even think for one moment what political problems the Brits would cause if their children suddenly join us? They will cry out we had seduced them into joining us and try to abolish us once more. They would most likely fail, but there is only a certain number of crises we can cause without starting a war." Liliths reprimand was true, there would be political outcomes to deal with, but that was Liliths playground, she knew more about the inner workings of the ICW and other political bodies than any other member of the Covenant. "Also don't forget that..." She suddenly stopped mid sentence, gesturing the others to stand still and be silent. She listened for a moment before she heard that certain sound again. "Do you hear this as well?"

All other listened intently before they heard it, too. It was a faint sound, somewhere from the trees near the shore. Apparently they were not as alone as they had initially believed. Alex gave some basic commands via hand signals before the entire group divided up and slowly walked towards the extension of the dark forest, their wands ready in their hands. The forest was brighter here, there were far less trees so close to the shore so it was easy to see most things here.

The sound became clearer as they proceeded and soon they had reached the source. Leaning against a tree was a small girl, knees drawn to her chest, sobbing audibly. The girl seemed completely oblivious to the Covenant members circling around her. Only when Alex stepped closer to her she seemed to snap out of her stupor and looked up to see the confused faces of almost a dozen Durmstrang students, including their leader.

"Benedikt, take the others and secure the area, don't let anyone near until I say so." Alex gave his command in Russian, only receiving a nod from his friend. Benedikt and the rest of the students quickly walked away to find themselves good positions to guard the area while only Alex and Lilith remained with the young girl. Said girl looked at the Grindelwald heir somewhat startled, not really sure whether situation had just gotten from bad to awful. "You are Rose Potter, are you not?" The girl simply nodded, still unsure what to say as the infamous student, the one her housemates had called a dark

lord, who looked down at her with an unreadable expression. "I guess you know who I am." Again she said nothing, she simply nodded as answer. "What are you doing out here, Rose? This is quite some distance from the castle. Why are you crying here all on your own?"

"I...I...just n..needed to get away from the other s...students. I often come here to be alone and think." Her voice became somewhat clearer when she had quelled down some of her sobs in an attempt to not look like a weak girl in front of the foreign wizards.

"And what got you so upset that you come out here, all alone to cry? Shouldn't your friends help you when you are troubled?" Alex pressed on, his curiosity still not sated, while Lilith watched her fiancée with a questioning look, not understanding what he wanted to achieve here.

"I no longer have any friends... they have all turned on me since my name came out of that goblet. No one believes me... they call me names... they shun me. I am all alone now. They all think I am obsessed with fame." More tears escaped her eyes as she told Alex about her misery. She didn't know why but it didn't bother her for him to know about what she has to go through. Everyone can see it only by looking around the school.

"What about your father or the teachers? The adults should do something to help you, it is their responsibility."

"My father has no authority over students and the teachers won't do anything as long as they don't see it happening. The other students always make sure that there is no teacher around when they start..."

"Fucking hypocrites. And they call Durmstrang a dark school. We have long abolished such behavior and even in the past the teachers at least had the guts to say that they don't care if it happened instead of lying that they can't do anything unless they catch the culprits red handed. Stupid lying Brits..." Lilith's sudden outburst surprised Alex a bit, though he could only admit that she was right. Rose seemed unaffected by the other girl's words, but that was most likely because Lilith had cursed in German and it was unlikely that Rose understood a single word Lilith had said.

"Today was the worst day of all... my own housemates cornered me outside the great hall, trying to interrogate me about how I entered my name into the Goblet. When I said I didn't do it they just yelled at me... One of them, Ron Weasley was the worst. He hates me, did so since our second year..." Rose continued solemnly not looking up at any of the other present persons.

"Some much for that so called house unity people spew about this school. And that boy, Weasley, why does he hate you? No one hates without reason."

"During our second year here there were attacks on students... a number of students got petrified by some unseen monster, my friend Hermione was one of them. Ron and Antares tried to pull me along to find out what was the cause for the attacks. One day Ron's sister Ginny disappeared, they said she had been taken down to the Chamber of Secrets where the monster resides... We found the entrance to Chamber, at least we think we did, but we were never able to open the entrance. They later said Ginny was dead... Ron blamed me for it... he said I should have been able to do more..." She trailed off after that, new tears falling.

Alex was amazed by this, a monster running wild at a school full of children, a student apparently dying because of that monster and Dumbledore managed to keep it quiet from the general public. Just how many more dark secrets does the old fool hide about this school. And then this idiocy to blame one small girl for it, just what kind of idiots roam this school. "And why exactly does that fool believe that you should have been able to save that girl? And again, where were the adults, where was that fool Dumbledore during all this?"

"Because they all believe I am special. Just because I am the sister of the boy who lived. I don't even remember my dead brother. But they all say he was so strong and defeated You-know-who so I should be just as powerful as he is. Even Dumbledore said something like that at the end of our first year, he said he had great expectations for me, that I could be just as powerful or even greater than my brother. My friends heard that and from then believed it must be the truth... Because of that Ron blamed me that I didn't try hard enough to save his sister... I did everything I could but I just couldn't open the chamber... and now he yells at me that I only use my supposed 'gifts' to gain fame..."

"Those people are just plain dumb, aren't they? And you really want to recruit amongst those idiots?" Lilith asked her fiancée in her native tongue, looking aghast at how the people here were treating the small red head girl.

"Yes, Lilith, they maybe idiots, but they will learn. By recruiting them we will teach them what true Unity means. And we will begin by recruiting this girl, the old man won't know what hit him.

Rose looked at the two older students somewhat confused, they were talking in a foreign language, but whatever they were talking about seemed to amuse them. Probably just more people making fun of me, Rose thought sadly.

"Say, Rose, would you like to train with us from time to time? I mean take part in our usual morning training routine. It would get you away from the school and those backstabbing housemates and would help you during the tournament." Alex gave her a friendly smile which she reciprocated very hesitantly.

"But why? Why do you want to help me? Aren't we rivals in this tournament?"

Alex laughed slightly, this girl wasn't dumb, he really did want to help her and not just to spite Dumbledore. Somehow he knew it was right to help her at least survive this tournament. "Rivals or not it is not right to let you go into this competition without proper training. Unless your headmaster starts taking your participation seriously I will ensure that you will at least survive this tournament. And I want you to know that I haven't fought so hard to unify my school and abolish such despicable behavior to sit by idly and watch while you are bullied by a bunch of brain dead morons that can't think for themselves."

A bit away from Alex Benedikt was leaning against a tree, watching the sun breaking through the few remaining discolored leaves on the trees as he saw another boy approaching. He scrutinized him, but made no move to acknowledge his presence otherwise. When the boy was less the ten feet away from him, the unknown student was thrown to his knees and held at wand point by two of Benedikt's teammates that had hidden themselves before. The boy, a Hogwarts

student with a red tie looked terrified at his captors, while Benedikt slowly came closer to him.

"I really hope for you that you have a very good reason to come here or else you will act as dummy for my daily target practicing." A cold smirk spread on Benedikts face, oh he loved to scare those foolish Hogwarts students whenever he got the chance to. Alex mostly wouldn't let him, but right now Alex was busy so Benedikt could do what he wanted.

"I am here to search for Mr Grindelwald. They need him and Mr Krum for an event concerning the Triwizard Tournament. Your fellow students told me I would find him here..." Surprisingly he did not stutter though he looked like he would wet himself the very next moment.

"I see. Get up maggot and wait here, I will see if he has time for your idiocy. Keep an eye on him, don't let him move to much." With this Benedikt walked away in the direction where he had last seen his friend, only to return moments later with Alex, Lilith and much to the Hogwarts students surprise, Rose Potter.

"Alright kid, what is it you want?" Alex looked almost bored at the student, not really interested in what the boy had to say. He was somewhat angry to be disturbed and to have a Hogwarts student see him with Rose Potter before he had the chance to ensure her loyalty to his side. Now the old fool would most likely interfere. He would have to act quick if he wanted to gain Rose as a member for the Covenant.

"They sent me to find you and Mr Krum for the Weighing of the Wands. I am supposed to lead you there, Mr Krum is already waiting near your ship for our return."

Completely ignoring the boy Alex turned to Rose, seeing her baffled look at what she heard. "You didn't know anything about this either I see." After she shook her head Alex turned back to the boy. "Is this for all champions or does Mr Dumbledore wish to know the wands of his rivals to prepare his champion better for competition?"

The boy looked insulted at the insinuation that his headmaster would try to gain an unfair advantage and typical Gryffindor courage he openly voiced his opinion. "Of course this is for all champions.

Professor Dumbledore would never try anything underhanded to gain an advantage. He is an honorable man, much unlike your own headmaster." The boy almost sneered at Alex, only causing his Durmstrang guards to make their presence known by sending him to his knees once more.

"Your headmaster is everything but honorable, foolish boy. Years ago he tried to steal my wand during a dueling competition to gain his students an advantage in the fights. Your headmaster is a manipulative, delusive old man, unfit for any of his current positions. You will soon learn that the old man has more dark sides then he wants the people to know about. But at least one thing you got right. Igor truly is a bastard." Alex fellow students laughed slightly at that, much to the surprise of the two present Hogwarts students. Before the boy knew what was happening to him he was pulled back to his feet and pushed back towards the ship. "Come on you fool, we need to take a shower after our training, then you will lead us to that event and don't waste my time any further after that."

At Durmstrang Ivanna sat in the high masters office at his desk, sorting through the more recent paperwork Karkaroffs deputy had delegated her. That lazy man was a real pain in the ass and even with the help of Arvid and Rebecca this job was getting way out of hand combined with the school work and Ivanna's self imposed training regimen. And on top of that she now had to deal with a troll sleeping in one of their greenhouses.

"And pray tell me why you saw it fit to not just let that beast onto the school grounds, but also into one of our greenhouses, Astris?" Ivanna looked exasperated at the young Nymph that bounced around the room, unable to sit quietly for more then a minute.

"I told you I didn't let it in. It found a hole in the walls and came in because the conditions are much more pleasant here. I simply guided the poor thing to greenhouse because it had its favorite food inside."

"What food? Foolish first years?" Arvid snickered at that, while Astris could only pout.

"No, duh. The plants inside. That is a forest troll, completely vegetarian. I really thought you had already learned that... Bobby

really means no one any harm and he is also quite small for a troll of his kind."

"Bobby? Oh forget I asked. But really Astris ever since you came here you caused one problem after another and you haven't even finished your first term at this school. Just what is wrong with you?" Ivanna looked coldly at the first year before her, not really understanding the girl's motivations most of the times.

"I am bored and Bobby really needed a warm home. He won't cause trouble I promise."

"Bored... god dammit stop bouncing around in my office." With a flick of her wand Ivanna sent a spell at the young girl's feet, freezing them to the ground in a solid ice block that reached up to her knees. "Huh, didn't think that spell would work..."

"Not fair, let me go." Astris whined while she struggled to get free, not knowing any real spell to melt the ice. "Would you teach me some more spells I wouldn't be so bored all the time, first year classes are not challenging at all."

"Ivanna, I think you should unfreeze her unless you want her to suffer from hypothermia." Rebecca interjected somewhat annoyed, she always tried to remain neutral and collected but between Astris' attention seeking problems and Ivanna's mood swings that was almost impossible most of the times. Ivanna's moods were even more unpredictable than her brothers much to Rebecca's annoyance.

"Fine, you win, Rebecca." With another flick of her wand the ice quickly melted, much to Astris' delight. "But, Astris, if I let you train some spells with us you will have to promise not to cause any more trouble this year." The young Nymph nodded eagerly at this. "Okay, now leave my office."

Only moments after Astris had left Arvid looked at Ivanna questioningly. "Your office?"

Rebecca though ignored Arvid's question to voice her own concerns. "Do you really think this is wise, Ivanna? Astris may be a bit too young for some of the spells we use in our training."

"A don't worry so much about it, Rebecca. In the worst case she won't learn a thing and I can use her for target practice with some of the none lethal spells." Ivanna chuckled darkly at his, only to receive a chastising look from Rebecca. "But in the meantime, what are we going to do with Bobby?"

Alex looked rather bored at the entire scene before him. Dumbledore giving his same damn speech now in front of a press reporter that he had probably given to his own students before. And to top it all Alex was left somewhat alone with that strange man Ollivander. Years ago when Alex had first met him during the dueling competition Alex had already known that something was off about that man. "Ah Mr Grindelwald, how curious to meet you again. Ever since the day I was first allowed to see your wand I couldn't quite get my mind of it. Such a special piece of excellent craftsmanship. I wonder, may I get a chance to see it again?"

Alex sighed, he still remembered what happened the last time he had given his wand to Ollivander. Dumbledore had tried to take the wand away under the false accusation that it was made of dark materials. There was no way he would part with it again. "You may see, but I won't allow you to touch it. Thank the esteemed headmaster for that, I don't take lightly to people trying to rob me of my possessions." With that he removed the wand from its holster and held it in front of Ollivander, his grip tight around it at all times.

"Ah yes, that was sad misunderstanding. The materials used for your wand are most unusual and anyone would think it might be dark, considering it is made out of dragon bone."

"Only close minded people that fear all things they know nothing about. I believe you have seen enough and I think your friend has finished his boring monologue that won't even appear in tomorrows newspaper."

Moments later they finally began with the ceremony after the last of the champions, Hogwarts own Cedric Diggory, had finally arrived. Despite the messengers difficulties to find the Durmstrang delegation they had somehow managed to arrive first, together with Rose Potter, much to Dumbledore's confusion. This also had the amusing effect that the French champion had to pass by eight Durmstrang students outside the room, none of these students missing to give her the feeling that she would drop dead the next

moment if they had their way with her. Alex mused that he probably had never seen anyone enter a room quite as fast before.

"Well, now that all champions have finally arrived, let us begin with the ceremony. Afterward there will be a few photos and some interviews for the next Daily Prophet. The public is greatly interested in this Tournament." Dumbledore's voice boomed through the room, gaining him the attention of most present people. Alex and Victor though decided to act unaffected and were standing silently at the side, not caring about what happened around them, much to the old mans annoyance. "Mr Grindelwald, Mr Krum. Did you hear what I said, we are about to begin."

Alex smirked, now all attention was directed at them. "We did hear you, it would take a deaf person not to hear your voice after using a spell to enhance your voice to an annoying level. Unless you wish to start with Victor I suggest you carry on. I won't show you my wand, Mr Dumbledore. One attempt to steal it is enough, I won't give you a second chance to try it." These last words got the attention from the reporter, her animated quill scribbling down something on her notepad while she watched the headmasters reaction. Karkaroff, who stood next to Dumbledore, only smirked knowingly. He had been there to stop the first attempt and would gladly give detailed information about it to the reporter, soiling the old mans reputation was one of the few true sources of entertainment the High Master of Durmstrang had left these days.

"I can assure you I had never the intent to steal your wand, Mr Grindelwald. I was merely worried about the unusual and clearly illegal materials that were used to craft it and wanted to keep it safe during that dueling competition so it wouldn't cause your opponents needless harm. I saw it as a danger to..."

"Your students chances, yes we already knew that, thank you. Talking about wands, I want the wand you stole from my grandfather back, oh my bad of course I mean the wand you keep safe for him while you have him incarcerated in his own prison. But we will talk about that later, for now continue with this ceremony, we ain't got all day." This event had just turned from boring to more then entertaining for Alex, the next day they would find out just how much power the old man has on the press.

Meanwhile Elena and her team were roaming the dungeons of Hogwarts, one of the places she was sure the chances of encountering her haughty cousin were minimal. They were still far from finished to map out the entire castle. Every time they believed to be done with a level they found another hidden corridor, room or trapdoor. And the dungeons were the worst part of it. They couldn't even imagine how far the underground parts of the castle would reach. There was a great number of old unused classrooms they had passed so far. Only a few of the rooms were still in use, the only teacher who willingly worked down here was the schools potion master, which was quite ridiculous in Elena's viewpoint. Working on potions with their sometimes less then healthy vapors in rooms that had only very small windows at best seemed somewhat suicidal, but so far the Brits have not made much sense to her anyways.

Some time days ago, during their first visit they also seen a group of students enter another hidden room behind a hidden door. But they couldn't investigate further, unfortunately that door was locked with a password and trying to break in could have caused to much trouble. Still they observed the entrance to that room for some time, seeing more and more students entering and leaving it. Apparently all those students were from the same house, all of them wearing the same green ties and the crest of the house Slytherin. So far the snakes had been friendly to them, just maybe they would also grant them entrance to that room, at least Elena hoped they would or else they would have to find another way to get the information on that part of the castle.

As she continued walking on with her team she suddenly found herself in the presence of the sneering Hogwarts potions master, Severus Snape. It was not like they tried to hide themselves while they looked around, but it was unfortunate that a member of the faculty found them this early during their scouting.

"What is a bunch of you little dark wizards doing in my dungeon?" He sneered at them, not really impressing any of the Durmstrang students.

"Fancy that you call us dark wizards. It must really pay of to be Dumbledore's pet Death Eater so you can point the finger at others without fearing retribution for your own crimes." Elena looked coldly at the dark haired man, getting a glare from him in return.

"Ah yes, of course. Ms Grindelwald, the Veela sister of your resident Dark Lord. I shouldn't be surprised by your lack of respect and manners, being the animal you are you must have a hard time keeping this human disguise. You only use your brother's name to escape punishment for your uncontrollable temper."

"Do you really think you can get a rise out of me that easily, Death Eater. You fail here. Tell the old man that, the only person that will die by my hand sooner or later will be the bitch I unfortunately once called a cousin. But I won't disgrace Alex by giving you the pleasure of maiming you. Maybe we should advise your headmaster to neuter you the same way we have neutered our own pet Death Eater. You traitor scum are the worst among the group of brain dead maniacs that followed Voldemort's delusions. You especially look like someone who would sell out his only friend to gain an advantage." Elena smirked coldly as she saw the rising anger in the potion master's face.

"Get the hell out of my dungeons, next time I see any of you down here I will have you expelled from your school before you..."

"I'd really like to see you try. Karkaroff would never even dare to expel any of us and your master has no authority at Durmstrang, so go and bugger someone who cares." Without sparing the fuming man another glance Elena and her group walked past him towards the stairs that lead out of the dungeon. All the way Elena was muttering angrily to herself. "Do they really believe they can weaken us by such methods? First antagonizing us until we attack, then expel us... bloody idiots."

In Alex's point of view the useless ceremony couldn't end fast enough. Showcasing the wands of the four champions for the press, photos and then the interviews, it was really just a waste of time. Luckily he could escape that reporter and avoid unwanted questions. He had already delivered the information he wanted the public to know, giving more detailed answers would be unwise for the moment. Some information were better as black mail material. The reporter quickly let go of him and haunted the next best victim, poor little Rose Potter. Alex couldn't help her with this problem, her family would have to deal with the press by themselves. But surely there would be questions as to why she arrived together with the Durmstrang students when all other champions arrived much later.

"Mr Grindelwald, I think we should talk." Again Dumbledore approached Alex, not really surprising, but still unwanted.

"And why, Mr Dumbledore? I believe everything has already been said in the matters between us. What else do you want to bother me with"

"I am sure it will be informative for you. But please let us move to my office, I would prefer a less public place." With a friendly smile and a small wave of his hand he gestured towards the corridor that would lead down to his office in the hope Alex would comply without rebuke.

"Fine, we will talk, but my fiancée and several of my fellow students will be present. I don't trust you enough to enter a room alone with you." Dumbledore sighed, but complied. At least Alex was willing to talk, it was a beginning. Outside Alex gave a short signal to his group and they quickly fell in line behind him, Lilith walking at his side, while the rest of the Durmstrang students followed Victor back to the ship.

His office was just like Alex had imagined it, golden colors to underline the light theme and bookshelves filled with books that solely covered light magic, it made Alex really wonder who Dumbledore tried to convince of his alignment, his guests or rather... himself. The old wizard sat in his throne-like chair behind his desk, his grandfatherly mask firm in place again, apparently he had already forgotten what the reporter heard earlier or he tried to cover up his insecurity about his reputation. The man was far too calm, he must be planning something again, but Alex was sure he would be prepared for whatever the man had cooked up now.

Alex and Lilith sat in the chairs in front of the desk, Alex looking utterly bored while Lilith scanned the room with interest, trying to memorize everything the man had stored on his shelves. Especially the dozens of magical objects and artifacts and the currently empty perch next to the desk. The other three members of Alex's team stood a few feet behind them, their hands always discreetly on their wands in case the old man tried anything funny.

"Good, now that we are settled, may I offer you anything? Tea? Lemon drop?" Yes here in his office Dumbledore felt safe and showed it openly for all his guests to see.

"I have no need for your potion laced sweets or tea. Why did you request this meeting, Mr Dumbledore. Please don't waste my time, I would much rather spend my time training right now then sit in yet another useless conversation with you where you only try to slander my parents names because of a man that my mother has never met in her life."

The old wizard sighed, he would rather sit down and discuss things until they are resolved, but in this case he would stick to the more prominent problems. "I am worried about your sisters current behavior. Her open hostility towards her cousin has already infected many other students and I am sure you know of the growing animosity between your school and Beauxbatons."

"I know very well that you have already met with Mrs Delacour several years ago. Don't act as if you don't know anything about the family problems Elena has with the unwanted parts of her relations. I didn't ask for this animosity between the two schools, but that hussy Delacour rallied her fellow students against my sister. They want trouble and I will teach them not to mess with my family. Have a talk with the French, tell them to stop their attempts to antagonize my sister and I order my students to stop the hostilities. The conflict is only between the Delacour and Grindelwald families and should stay that way." Alex tried his hardest to remain calm, but the growing animosity between the two schools was really pissing him off lately.

"I will relate this message if you wish, alas I must implore you to persuade your sister to refrain from violence when she meets her cousin. At least that much should be possible."

"What do you think I am trying, Dumbledore." Alex exploded towards the old wizard. "I did my utmost to make her forget the grief the Delacours have caused her. I even persuaded my parents to adopt her to give her what she missed the most, a real family where people care for her. I try to be there for her whenever I can, but whatever her blood relatives have done to her it has left deep emotional scars that won't heal that easy. Elena means a lot to me so don't you dare think I won't try to help her get over this shit." Albus looked shocked as the boy raged on, Lilith next to him smiled sadly at his last statement, knowing full well that Alex would never be hers alone. He cared far too much about some others, a selected number of people, a group she hoped to be part of. To Albus

Dumbledore the scar on Alex head seemed especially intriguing, when Alex got angry it once again reeked of the dark magic the old wizard had felt so many years ago during the Winter ball at the German Ministry. He definitely would have to investigate that scar at a later time.

"If the only way for her to move on is to destroy the Delacours then so be it." Alex outburst surprised the old wizard, never before had the Grindelwald heir shown such emotions in front of him. To Albus it was somewhat comforting to know that the boy really can show emotions, especially such as caring and protectiveness of others. Good and honorable traits. It gave the old wizard hope that he still had a chance to convert the boy to the light side. At the same time Lilith had moved closer to him, one arm slung around his shoulder, pulling him close, while she whispered soothing words into his ear in an attempt to calm him down.

"I am sorry if my words have upset you, Mr Grindelwald. My words might have been ill chosen. I just wish for this all to end without bloodshed." Dumbledore now tried to placate the young Grindelwald, if he would be anything like his grandfather it would be a bad idea to continue talking to an emotionally upset boy.

"So do I, headmaster. Bloodshed is always the last thing I wish to resort to. I don't like killing, but sometimes we are in positions where we have no other choice but to take a life in order to save many others." Alex heaved a deep sigh, now looking much more composed and calm. "Is there anything else you want to talk about at the moment? I would rather finish open businesses with you now, before you make wrong conclusions again."

For a moment he pondered whether to ask why Rose Potter arrived together with him and Victor Krum, but he decided against it. It surely must have been coincidence, nothing more. "No, I believe we are finished for today. But my door will always be open for you, whenever you feel like talking. I am sure we could resolve a great many of our problems with words rather than fights in the public. Other than that I wish you a pleasant day, Mr Grindelwald."

"We will see about that, Mr Dumbledore. There are many problems between us that cannot be resolved by words anymore. We are both too stubborn for that. Good day, headmaster." Alex and his group quickly left the headmasters office, Lilith always at her fiancée's side.

The headmaster of Hogwarts though remained seated, contemplating the conversation he just had and the peculiar scar on the forehead of the Grindelwald heir.

A\N: Another chapter done, I hope this one didn't disappoint. There were so many more things I wished to add to it, but I simply had to draw a line here. The chapter already is the biggest I have written so far, almost a thousand words longer than the previous chapter. I really strive to have the chapters somewhere near the same length, but to be truthful the last 8 chapters each time almost had twice the length of the first six chapters. But oh well from this point I always aim for roughly 7500 to 8000 words per chapter.

And yes, it may be shocking for many people, but Ginny Weasley is dead in this fic and Ron hates Rose because of that. Not because I hate her or something, I just think she is a flat character with many unused chances, but the reason for her death is simple. Rose is no Parselmouth and no one else at Hogwarts is. None of them could open the Chamber, so no one came to Ginnys rescue. The other consequences of this are all up to your own imagination.

About the next chapters, there will be one more chapter before the first task. The task will be in chapter twenty. Something I haven't done before, I will already give you the title for the next chapter, the title for chapter 19 will be Unity. Have fun until then, I will try not to take too much time for the next installment.

And as always please Review, I really love all my Reviewers, your opinions are important and valued.

Chapter 19: Unity

"Come on, Rose. Just a little longer. Keep on running." Alex jogged casually next to the visibly exhausted girl, trying to motivate her to keep on going until they reached their goal. More than a week had already passed since the young Potter girl had started to train with the Durmstrang students. It was common knowledge amongst the Hogwarts students that she did this, but it couldn't really make her situation any worse. The fact that the teachers and the headmaster actually allowed this to happen was what surprised the students the most. For Albus Dumbledore this was a welcome situation, young Rose would receive some training for the tournament and in return she could have some positive influence on the Grindelwald heir, or so the old wizard had hoped. At the very least it allowed the Hogwarts headmaster some insight on the Covenant, someone who could give him information about Alexander's plans or at least a warning should the boy start to behave oddly.

The young girl collapsed on one of the stone benches that were scattered around the shore near the castle. Alex sat down next to her, looking only mildly affected by their training, while the other Covenant members around them continued their workout with some sparring and different exercises.

"You are a slave driver, I can't go on like this." She panted, breathing hard while she tried to regain some strength.

"Get over yourself. I started this kind of training when I was barely five years old. Once you do this every day you get used to it and it will be quite pleasurable. All Durmstrang students do this, most start at age eleven when they join the school, but many parents have started training their children at a young age before school to raise their chances at success at our school. Just like my parents did when I was a small boy." Alex grinned at the memory of his father tormenting him with his training regimen when he was still young. Fond memories now, back then he believed it to be hell on earth just like Rose does now.

"Your parents did this to you? I don't even want to think about such a thing. When I was five my parents barely let me leave the house... they are always worried about me. Ever since my brother was killed they try to protect me from everything." She said the last part a bit bitterly. It was plain obvious that this behavior molded her to be the

timid girl she is now. She still shies back from almost every Durmstrang member, all except Alex and Lilith for some reason. But that might be only because these two were the first ones to take care of her since her own school shunned her.

"My parents did this because they love me and want me to be prepared for every eventuality. Life is hard, it was especially hard at Durmstrang before we changed that. You might have heard about some things I had to do to change my school. In my first year I was forced to kill an older student, Mikhail Pajari. He was a threat to me and my friends, because of him my sister got severely hurt, nearly killed. After his death I tried my hardest to change the way Durmstrang works without further bloodshed. I succeeded and gladly today the school is a much more pleasant place for me and my fellow students. Bullying like the students here at Hogwarts like to do has no place among our students. We are all there united as fellow students and fellow Covenant members. To aid each other, to help whenever needed. To never judge without knowing, to further our knowledge, to create new ways to use our magic, but also to preserve what makes us what we are." Rose payed rapt attention as Alex described his school with pride in his voice. The way he depicted Durmstrang seemed almost like an unreachable ideal for a school. Of course Alex was biased towards his own school, but even if only half of it would be true it would still be amazing for Rose to see the school that is hidden from everyone except its students and teachers.

"Of course my parents were less then thrilled when I started my school life with fighting and killing. My mother... she was really upset. Upset that Elena got hurt, that I fought and killed another student. She loves and protects us from everything." Alex had a warm smile on his face as he talked about his mother and her love for her children. "My mother is nothing like her father. She is loving and caring where my grandfather is a cold and zealously ambitious man. I quite frankly can't stand being near him, but gladly he is currently locked up and can't move around too much."

"But they all say that all Grindelwalds are evil. That your grandfather was a dark lord like You-know-who and that his family is no better." The moment the words had left her mouth Rose realized what she had just said to the grandson of that man and looked down ashamed and slightly frightened. Afraid that he would now shun her like all

others because she had insulted his family, especially after he talked so admiringly of his mother.

"Well the time my grandfather was active was long before I was even born, but all I know about it is that he had an ideal for the magical world. He was willing to do things others abhorred in his attempt to reach his goal. Was he dark? Maybe. A dark lord like your Voldemort fellow? I would say no. Voldemort is a simple terrorist, a powerful one, but a terrorist no less. My grandfather fought with many different means, even politics. He inspired countries and thousands of people to follow him. In the end he was defeated and labeled a dark lord. He did unspeakable things, Rose, and therefore I believe he really is a dark lord. Different from your Voldemort but still a dark lord." Alex voice was calm, calculative. Dark Lord... would he be called something like that in the future, too? Maybe, but history is always written by the victors, so there is a chance he might never be seen as such a thing should he continue on his path.

"And do you believe me to be evil? Yes I have a rather controversial agenda, but believe me nothing of the things I do are done out of simple malice or anything like that. Soon you will understand why, once you heard all of my reasoning behind it you will understand. The only thing the students at this school know is simple gossip that doesn't even grasp the simplest concept of my agenda."

By now Lilith and Elena had joined Alex and Rose on the bench, listening silently to his explanations, both looking pensively. "And my mother is nothing like her old man. She didn't even know she was his child until she was 21, she grew up as an orphan. It might surprise you but she actually attended Beauxbatons in her younger years. As I said she is a gentle and caring person and I couldn't wish for a better mother. She is in no way evil and even rejects my grandfather's ideology. So anyone who badmouths her will have to answer to me." Alex looked darkly towards the lake at the end, making Rose feel quite uncomfortable after what she had said before. Lilith saw this and nudged Alex, gesturing towards the young girl so he saw the sudden fear on the young girls face.

"Don't worry, Rose. I know you didn't mean it, you just chose your words a bit poorly." He placed a hand on her shoulder, giving it a comforting squeeze, causing Rose to relax visibly. "Come now, enough sitting around, time to continue with the training before you can return to your dorm to rest." He pulled the girl up from the bench

and over to the other students to complete the remaining exercises with the young Potter.

Once Benedikt and his group had finished their training they decided to take a little stroll around the Hogwarts grounds. The British students had watched them curiously, a bit too curiously for Benedikt's liking. So he decided to take a look around for any problems, so far he trusted those students only as far as he could throw them. As his group left the ship after a quick shower there were still a large number of students watching the Durmstrang delegation as if they were animals in a zoo, it made Benedikt wish Alex would let him have his way with those disrespectful kids so he could beat some sense into their heads.

As he approached the Hogwarts students they quickly scattered and hurried back to their castle, quite scared by the dark looks they received by the approaching Covenant members. Only a hand full of students remained, some of them glaring at the foreigners. Oh yes if Benedikt wanted he could easily find himself a fight or two here, pity he wasn't allowed. He continued looking around, his gaze following the retreating group of students that entered the castle that moment. It was also that moment that his gaze fell upon one particular student that left the school while all others seemed hellbent on getting inside. He watched that student, a black haired girl walking down the path towards the lake, apparently aiming for the benches a bit distant from the Durmstrang ship. Benedikt looked her up and down, finding the girl quite a pleasant sight. With a predatory gleam in his eyes he decided to approach her. He wasn't allowed to fight the Hogwarts students, but that didn't mean he wasn't allowed to have some fun with the girls here. And Rebecca conveniently said that she wasn't interested in a relationship with him because of his childish antics or something like that. He hadn't really listened to all she told him that day.

The girl already saw him walking towards her before she had reached her intended destination, she had slowed down a bit, making it easy for the young Russian to catch up with her, the rest of his team some distance behind him, no really interested in their leaders newest attempt to add a new name to his list of conquests. Benedikt reached the girl just before she was able to sit down on the bench. She looked at him with curiosity shining in her eyes as his brown eyes met her ice blue.

"Greetings, Miss. A fine day to be outside and enjoy the last slightly warming hours in the sun before the cold winter, don't you think?" Benedikt flashed her his most charming smile, his eyes never leaving hers.

"It is indeed a nice day, excuse me but I didn't quite catch your name and I would rather know whom I am talking to." She watched Benedikt with a calculative gaze, not really reciprocating his smile.

"Where are my manners, Benedikt Kasakow at your service." As she offered him her hand he gently took it and placed a small kiss on her knuckles.

"Cassiopeia Black from the Noble and most Ancient House of Black." She let out a little smile as it dawned on Benedikt's face that she was more than just a simple school girl, but in fact the daughter of the head of one of the more influential families in Britain at the moment. But she also knew who she was talking to, Benedikt was by no means unimportant, he came from an old and rich Russian pureblood family. And was one of the highest ranking members within the Covenant, a group that held considerable political influence in much of Europe these days.

"A pleasure making your acquaintance. If I might ask, what brings such a lovely young lady out here all on her own? Shouldn't your fellow students worship the ground you walk on and follow you everywhere to fulfill your every whim? Clearly an earth-born goddess such as yourself should be treated that way." Cassiopeia was hard pressed not to laugh at Benedikt's exclamation, but in the end her long years of training as a pureblood lady won out and she composed herself.

"You are quite a charmer, Mr Kasakow."

"Please, you may call me Benedikt. And nothing I said was untrue, I meant every word of it."

"Then you may call me Cassiopeia for now. But to answer your earlier question, if it even was one, I am here alone because I want to get away from my fellow students. Unfortunately most of them are quite daft and I rather prefer solitude than baring their idiocy longer than absolutely necessary." Benedikt smirked widely, she wasn't just

pretty, but she also shared his dislike of the Hogwarts students. Now he was really bent on getting to know her better.

"If you wish you can always come and join me and my fellow students on our ship, I can assure you we are nothing like your fellow Hogwarts students."

"That I have already heard. You really are different, apparently other schools do have some better influence on their students behavior. But alas I should not judge now, when I know nothing about you and your fellow students. You might be brutal savages in private." She couldn't hide a small smirk as she saw Benedikt's amusement at her words.

"So you want to learn more about us? I can gladly oblige you with that. Next Saturday, when most of your schools students and teachers are gone to Hogsmeade my friend Alexander, our leader, will talk to all those willing to listen. He will explain the agenda we all follow and even answer questions, should there be any. If you are interested I will gladly take you there, maybe I can even get you a chance to talk to Alexander in person if you wish for it."

"This sounds... intriguing. I will gladly attend, I have been curious about your controversial agenda for quite some time. Ever since I first heard about it to be precise. There are so many rumors but so little facts about your believes. Hearing the truth from your point of view will be enlightening." A full smile had now blossomed on her face. She had come out here to get away from the growing idiocy of her cousin and brother, she had searched for solitude but somehow found a chance to finally get answers to some of her questions.

"I will come and escort you personally to the ship after lunch, Cassiopeia. Now would you like some company while you sit here or would you rather prefer that I leave you in peace for now."

"You may very well stay, I wouldn't mind to hear more about the man who wishes to escort me. I can't place my safety in the hands of a stranger?" Benedikt smirked widely as he sat on the bench next to her, both of them talking for quite some time while Benedikt's team watched from some distance, keeping an eye on their leader.

Rose was utterly exhausted. She was so tired she didn't have enough energy left to listen to the mocking from her fellow students

as she walked through the school. She had barely enough time to take a shower before she got the message to meet the headmaster in his office. So she slowly walked to the old wizards office, even though she would much rather fall asleep on the spot and not wake up until the next week begins.

She had not been to the headmasters office since her second year, but nothing had really changed since then. Fawkes, the headmaster's phoenix was sitting on his perch, watching the young girl idly as she entered the office and sat down in one of the chairs in front of the large desk and politely declined the sweets offered to her.

"Ah Rose, my girl. I called you because I wanted to inquire how your training with our guests from Durmstrang is progressing. I just wish to make sure that they are really helping you. I only reluctantly allowed them to take over your training for this tournament." Sporting his best grandfatherly smile, the old wizard looked at the young girl.

"It is exhausting, but I believe I can truly benefit from it. Alexander sacrifices his own time to help me and I am grateful for his help and for motivating me. I believe I would not survive the Triwizard Tournament without his help." The girl sat almost limply in her chair, looking at her headmaster with weary eyes.

"I am glad to hear that." Hearing her call him by his given name made him quite satisfied indeed. It meant that she was already closer to Alexander than he himself could ever hope to get to him, for now at least. But there was more, things she didn't say. Not because she didn't want to but simply because the girl had no idea what he really wanted to hear from her. Luckily for Albus Dumbledore the young Potter girl had no training in shielding her mind, she couldn't even detect an intrusion. This way he could easily check whether her words are true and see for himself what she has found out about the Grindelwald heir.

He shuffled through her more recent memories, taking his time with it. Rose did not mind the silence, she even dozed off slightly while the old man exhibited her memories without her knowledge. Albus frowned a bit when he found out that the girl sadly had not been on board of the Durmstrang ship, he was most curious about what is going on inside that ship. There were teachers with the foreign wizards that have not even once left the ship and he was very

interested in what subjects those people were teaching hidden from public view.

Then he stumbled upon Rose's memory of her conversation with Alexander about his family. Albus eyes widened slightly when he heard some things about Selene Grindelwald that he did not know before, he decided that he definitely had to investigate the daughter of his old friend a bit more closely now. Then he stumbled across something that made his eyes widen in shock. Alex said he couldn't stand being near him. Did this mean that Alexander had already met his grandfather in person? This would change quite a lot of things. The sudden appearance of Alexander's controversial agenda, a mindset that seemed to be too much like his grandfathers. Just how much influence does the old Grindelwald hold over his heir? This changes everything.

"I believe that is all for now, Rose. Go get some sleep, you look dead on your feet." The girl jerked out of her reverie by his sudden words before he gently ushered her out of his office. She was still too exhausted to ask questions. The girl was barely out of the door when the old wizard slumped down in his chair once more, already planning on what to do with the new information he had just received. He would have to find a way to use this to his advantage, he would just have to find a way to properly use this for his plans.

The next week passed by quickly and soon it was time for the gathering Alex had planned. While the majority of the Hogwarts students were on their way to spend their time in the village Hogsmeade, those students that were interested in his agenda would attend a gathering on board the Durmstrang ship. Not really a secret meeting, but they still kept quiet about it to minimize the disturbances.

As he had promised Benedikt went up to the castle to pick up Cassiopeia Black and escort her to the ship. She was easy enough to find, when Benedikt arrived she was already waiting for him outside the castle, looking rather bored while around her other students slowly walked towards the ship. Almost all those students wore long black cloaks with hoods drawn deep down into their faces to obscure their identities. Cassiopeia though had no intention to hide herself.

"Cassiopeia, it is a pleasure to be graced with your beauty once more." Benedikt bowed over her offered hand, placing a soft kiss on her knuckles. Both teens smiled warmly at each other as Benedikt offered her his arm and they slowly made their way back to the ship. "I must say I am quite surprised to see you without a cloak or any other way to hide your identity. Are you not worried about people finding out you attended today's event?"

Cassiopeia giggled slightly at his words, clearly amused. "Let them know. I have no intention to hide myself or my interests. When those idiots here in this school can't see who attends that gathering they just start making up ridiculous stories. Just wait a few days and they actually start gossiping that You-know-who himself attended today." Both laughed at that thought, but Benedikt knew Cassiopeia was right, there would be plenty of gossip about this day. "And to hide myself would hurt my pride. What can they do, really. Shun me? I don't need them. Hate me? I already ignore them. There is nothing to lose today."

"I just wish there were more students like yourself at this school. All those fools are really getting on my nerves. Had Alex not forbid me to attack them I would have already beaten some sense into most of your fellow students here."

"Sadly I believe that would take a lifetime, many people and so little common sense here. And your leader is right, beating them up would cause more trouble than it would be worth."

"Aye, I guess so. Well let us change the topic here. I really hope you will like what you hear today. Maybe you could even consider joining the Covenant... that would be definitely welcome. We are always on the lookout for intelligent and talented people to join our cause. But we only take those that truly believe in our agenda, we have no room for disruptions because of fighting within our own ranks. Let the others have the rabble, we are the elite." Benedikt smiled charmingly at her, getting a small smile from her in return.

"We shall see. No one knows what the future holds in store for us. I am curious, I hope it begins soon."

Heavy rain was falling as Albus Dumbledore approached the dark prison Nurmengard. Ice cold wind was blowing through its hallways as he slowly climbed the stairs to the topmost cell, the place where

Gellert Grindelwald had spent the last fifty years of his life since his defeat. Even though he did so grudgingly, Albus had to come here, he had to find out if his most recent discovery was true. He needed confirmation whether Alexander Grindelwald was had truly met his grandfather in person, should it be true this would add a whole new aspect to the threat that Alexander posed for Albus' students.

Gellert had already been warned by the wards that he had a visitor and he knew exactly who this person was. He smirked, knowing that for whatever reason the old fool came here, it must have some connection to Alexander's work at Hogwarts. Waiting for his former friends arrival, the old Grindelwald paced his room, mentally planing on how crush whatever idea the old man wished to express this time.

Without knocking or anything else, Albus entered the room, seeing his former friend look at him with an impassive face. "Ah, Gellert. How are you these days? Not too bored I hope?"

"Cut the chase, Albus. Why have you come here?"

"Very well, right to the point. I must know Gellert, has your heir come here to talk to you? Tell me the truth. Did you have direct contact to young Alexander?" Albus voice was firm, his expression grave. No sign of his usual grandfatherly mask was left, he knew it would not work with Gellert Grindelwald.

Gellert simply let out a barking laugh. He looked amused at the other man as he settled down in his usual chair near the window. "Ten years, Albus. I took you nearly ten years to realize that little fact. You are getting senile as it seems."

"So it is true. You have tried to poison young Alexander's mind with your wicked ideals..." Albus looked somberly at Gellert, shaking his head slowly. "I should have known. I should have known the very moment he started spouting these ridiculous theses. They are far to similar to your former agenda." Albus was silent for some moments before another memory came up, another question he wanted answered. "But you said ten years... does that mean the blood back then... Alexander's scar, that was your doing?"

"Indeed. The boy showed misbehavior and I punished him accordingly. So... what are you going to do now, Albus?"

"It seems I have to reconsider the terms of your incarceration... You are too dangerous to be allowed visitors."

"And do what? Kill me, Albus? Are you really ready to finish what you couldn't do so many years in the past? If you are willing then come, strike me down with the very wand you have stolen from me, kill me here and now, but know that my legacy will live on and destroy you. My heir is out of your reach. Touch him and you will plunge your world into a war that will change everything." The smug smirk on the old Grindelwald's face couldn't grown any bigger as he saw the troubled look on Albus face.

"No, killing is never the answer, Gellert. I had really hoped you had learned that lesson after so many years. But I will not abandon hope for your heir. Alexander will not fall into the darkness you have planed for his future. He will do great things for the light and help us protect the innocent from all threats, I will see to that." Albus spoke with firm resolve, fully convinced that he will succeed.

Gellert though only laughed at him again. "Good luck, Albus. With every moment you wast here Alexander's plans progress further. He will never follow you, because those innocents you want to protect are narrow minded fools that fear everything they don't understand. People like you destroy our world out of fear, you condemn innocents simply because they are dark in your eyes. Dark just because you don't like what they believe in. You will fail, Albus." Both wizards tried to stare the other down, neither willing to let the other gain the upper hand. "You better return to your school, else there might be no one left on your side by the time you return."

Albus finally broke the eye contact and walked towards the door. "This is not over, Gellert. I will not let you win."

"Run away, Albus. You have no chance of winning. The savior you so desperately need is so close, but forever out of your reach. Your days are numbered." Accompanied by the barking laughter of the old Grindelwald, Albus slowly descended the stairs to leave the prison. All the way contemplating the words of the former dark lord.

"Where are you bringing me today? Has the training been canceled or something?" Rose was confused as Lilith lead her towards the ship, Alex nowhere in sight.

"Yes, today there will be no training. Today you will learn something else, believe me you will understand a lot more once you heard everything today. But first put this cloak on and make sure the hood obscures your face properly." Lilith handed the younger girl a crimson cloak that was definitely one or two sizes too big for the girl. After she had donned the large cloak Rose looked up to Lilith, before the older girl led her along to the ship.

The aurors on the ship eyed Rose curiously, but today they would let most people enter certain parts of the ship. And since Rose was in the presence of Lilith she would be allowed almost anywhere on the ship, the aurors would not doubt the daughter of their minister, at least not the German aurors. The Russians were a bit more distrusting, always fearing an ambush at every corner.

Lilith led Rose to a large room on the ship, the many chairs in front of a podium already filled with a large number of people, most also wearing cloaks like hers, but some sitting there idly, no worry about their identities getting out to the public. She could see a few familiar faces, a few Slytherins, Greengrass and Zabini among them, but also some Ravensclaws, Corner and Belby sitting near the front chatting idly. It didn't surprise Rose that there were no Gryffindors showing their faces here, for a moment she wondered whether she was the only member of her house present for this gathering. But there were also no visible members from Hufflepuff as well. Lilith led Rose to a somewhat secluded chair from where she could see everything without having to fear that anyone could see her face under the hood.

When Rose looked around she saw another group entering the room, up front was Benedikt with a black haired girl on his arm. Rose gasped a bit when she realized that the girl was Cassiopeia Black, the daughter of her godfather. Like some of the others Cassiopeia made no attempt to hide herself, laughing at something Benedikt said as he led her to a chair in the front row, before he went up to the stage and talked to Alexander, who had entered the room from a back door only moments before.

Alex looked around the room, smiling slightly at seeing the large number of guests present. Almost sixty people had come to listen to him today, if he played his cards right that would be sixty new members for the Covenant. Benedikt came close, sporting a wide grin as he stood near Alex, whispering in a hushed voice. "That are all,

Alex. A lot of kids have come to listen to you. To my knowledge there are also six French students among them. Looks like the bitch does not have the full support of her school as she likes to claim."

"Good, keep an eye out for possible troublemakers. Let the aurors know that we do not expect any more guests. I do not want any interruption during the speech." Benedikt simply nodded in understanding and left the stage to fulfill his orders.

Alex walked to the speaker's desk and looked at the assembled people. The room quieted quickly, everyone watching the young Grindelwald with rapt attention. "My friends, I can't express the gratification I feel at seeing so many people here, willing to listen and understand what the Unity Theses stand for, what the Covenant fights for. You all have been told a lot about us, some of those things are lies, some are conjecture, some are the truth. First up, you have been told we are dark wizards, you have been told that I am a dark lord in the making. That is a blatant lie. Are we dark because we wish to preserve our culture with all its facets?" He paused a moment, looking at the people before he continued vehemently. "NO, we simply wish to live the lives that we were raised to live."

The room was deadly silent, no one spoke, all listening intently. "The Unity Theses teach us one thing above all else. All magical beings can only survive in this world united against the common threat. Some may say that non human races are inferior to human wizards and witches. Don't let yourself be fooled by such propaganda. Look at this girl to my left, my sister Elena." With this Elena stepped forward so everyone could easily see her in the room. "She is not human, she is a full blooded Veela. She can beat almost every wizard on this ship and in your castle. She can do that without using any veela powers, simply by using her magic that she learned the same way we all did. She is also generally loved by her fellow students for her loyalty and protectiveness of her friends. She is no beast and definitely not inferior to any human being."

Most people watched Elena until she sat back down on a chair behind Alex on the podium. Alex could still see some of the guests shake their heads slightly in disbelief. "The Unity Theses teach us that we all are equal. We are all magical. We were all born into this magical world with its traditions and cultures. We all wish to live our lives according to the customs we are used to. But yet there is an

outside threat to our way of life. Can anyone tell me what threat I am talking about?"

A number of people quickly yelled out different people they felt that were to blame for all the problems of their society. Among the favorite words were muggles, mudbloods and blood traitors. "The greatest threat to our existence as a society comes from the muggle world. We fear them. We hide ourselves from them and that with due reason. They would not understand us, they would hunt down magical creatures for sport and possibly even try to completely destroy us. They fear that which they cannot understand and magic is on top of that list. To them we would be a danger and they destroy dangerous things without mercy. That is why we hide ourselves, our world. That is why we live our lives in the shadows of a world that had been ours in the past. In a time long before we decided to hide ourselves from the muggle eyes. Now we are nothing more than prisoners in a world that would destroy us should we ever reveal ourselves." He shook his head sadly, many murmured in consent with him.

"Yet we have adapted to the lives we have to lead, adapted to a life in the shadows. But we will forever live in the constant fear of being found out. And every year we have to risk our secrets being exposed, every year when the unwitting heralds of our doom enter our world. Yes I am talking about muggleborn students. They come from the world we fear, they bring their screwed up beliefs from the muggle world into ours. They enter a world they know nothing about, they intrude upon our lives. And instead of accepting that they are no longer part of the muggle world they deny their real nature. They try to preserve their former lives at all cost. They try to change our world so it is no longer foreign to them." This caused some angry shouts of mudblood from the audience, before the people calmed down again.

Alex heaved a deep sigh. "They are like us, yet they deny their true nature. There are some among them who are honorable enough to accept our world and adapt to it. But sadly most of them have no intention of adapting. And then there are those fools from our world that believe that they have to coddle those muggleborn children who reject our world. Fools like Albus Dumbledore that willingly destroy parts of our culture, who willingly restrict our own people to accommodate those foreign intruders. I say those people enter our society, they encroach upon our world and if they want to stay, they

have to get used to our way of life and not the different way around. That is what the Covenant fights for." Alex smiled inwardly, more and more of the audience had removed their hoods and openly voiced their consent with his words.

"Imagine the situation, a muggleborn happens upon a blood mage, what do you believe he thinks about that mage? Of course he condemns him as evil, magic that uses a persons blood that must be an evil art invented by the devil himself. Or a muggleborn meeting a dragon for the first time. They are scared and first think about ways to slay the wicked beasts instead of seeing them as magnificent creatures not very much different from the wild animals in the muggle world. Our world is foreign to them and they fear our world because of that." He paused a moment to look around, he looked at Rose, seeing her paying attention to his every word.

"And now people like Albus Dumbledore come, in order to make it easier for those helpless muggleborn students they outlaw certain types of magic or drop them from their school curriculum. Have you never asked yourself why there are so many unused classrooms in your school? Ever since Dumbledore took over as headmaster almost fifty years ago the standards at Hogwarts have fallen and there is still no end in sight. Or other things that have been taken from magical children. The law against underage magic outside of the school. A law intended to make it easier for muggleborn children to keep up with their magical counterparts. Because those muggleborn cannot practice in their holidays without breaking the statute of secrecy people like Dumbledore and his ilk implemented that law in Britain so no student could learn any practical magic in the holidays." This caused another uproar among the audience, students from Hogwarts even demanding the removal of their illustrious headmaster.

Alex smiled, he had almost reached his goal. He got them to dislike their own headmaster, now all was left was to convince them of the superiority of the Covenant. "And here we come, the Crimson Covenant with our Unity Theses. We try to unite the magical world under one banner to preserve our way of life, defend it against those traitors. And what are the traitors and their muggleborn pets doing? They denounce us as evil, as dark wizards akin to terrorists like Voldemort. I ask you, all of you, do you really want to live in a world where you have to limit yourselves to accommodate intruders?... No. You all know where you come from, you know the culture you have

grown up in. We all shall never surrender, we mustn't let them win. We must stand up, united as brothers and sisters to defend our way of life. United under the banner of the Covenant." As he stopped he saw the faces of his many listeners. Yes they understood his reasoning, they love it and are willing to follow it.

"On the tables behind you you will find pamphlets. When you leave you can take them with you. They contain the Unity Theses, read them, learn them, live them. But before you leave, I will answer your questions." He looked around seeing the first courageous student stand up to ask a question.

"You say the Covenant fights against those who threaten our way of life, but what exactly are you doing against those people?"

"A good question. How should we treat those, who shamelessly betray our world. How should we treat those who encroach upon our world to destroy it? Kill them all without mercy?" The room was deadly silent once more, everyone waiting for the answer almost impatiently. "They all deserve punishment. But to kill them would place us on the same level as terrorists like Voldemort. No, some will die for their treachery. But some will also simply be stripped of their magic and their memories. They like the muggle world, then let them live as muggles. But to prevent others of magical blood to become the same abominable traitors we have to act early, before the muggles have a chance to poison their minds. No magical child, muggleborn or of magical descent should have to be raised by muggles." Seemingly satisfied the student that had asked the question sat back down, only moments before another shot up, his hood falling from his head as he stood up, revealing a blond haired boy that most present people knew very well.

"So you would actually soil our bloodlines with muggleborn children? Raising them away from their filthy muggle parents won't make decent wizards out of them. The dark lord is..." The boy would have continued his rant, but stopped mid sentence as Alex raised a hand, beckoning him to be silent.

"You seem to misunderstand the meaning of the Unity Theses, Mr Malfoy. All magical blood is equal. Our problems with muggleborns are not because of their blood but because of their upbringing. A child raised by an enemy will never be willing to understand our way of life. Your dark lord is naught but a terrorist. A truly powerful man,

it would be a mistake to not respect him for his strength but also it would be a mistake to follow his ideals. Power without morals will only lead to self destruction. Our path will unite our world and strengthen it, his path lead only to the destruction of our world in a senseless civil war where whole families were annihilated simply for not agreeing with him." Alex fixed the Malfoy heir with a cold gaze, daring him to speak up again.

"The dark lord is a great man that will lead us pure bloods into a golden future without those that hamper our progress in this world. A pure and powerful world."

"The only pure world that man knows is a world where he is the only inhabitant. His future is less desirable than Dumbledore's. Look at what the civil war has done to magical Britain. Look at how many of you esteemed pure blood families have been utterly destroyed to indulge the thirst for revenge of one man. Follow him, Mr Malfoy, and I guarantee you that the Malfoy family will end up as just another note in history, another family that ceased existing in a war without meaning. If you do not believe, leave. Be my guest and find out yourself." With a simple wave of his hand Alex gestured towards the door of the room, his face impassive as he stared the young Malfoy. All eyes in the room were directed at Draco. The boy hesitated for a moment, unsure of what to do before he stormed out of the room in an angry huff, his mind reeling from what he had heard here today. No one followed him. Not even his goons that had sat with him, both not even looking conflicted, they did not care for the departure of their leader much to Cassiopeia's amusement.

"If there aren't any more questions we will end this gathering here. I thank you all for your time and willingness to listen. Don't fear approaching us if you have further questions or should you wish to join the Covenant. And don't forget to take a pamphlet on your way out, read it thoroughly. Good day to all of you." With this Alex stepped a few feet back towards his friends, all of them watching as the room emptied slowly. Benedikt meanwhile had stepped down from the podium to the girl he had escorted here, offering her his arm once more as he brought her up to introduce her to Alexander.

"Alex, this is Cassiopeia Black, I told you about her before." Cassiopeia scrutinized the Grindelwald heir, a person that had interested her for quite some time now.

"My pleasure. Ms Black are you by any chance related Sirius Black?"

"My father, but how do you know him, Lord Grindelwald?"

"I briefly met him some years ago at a ministry ball. I believe he is an acquaintance of my parents. One of the few that has taken Dumbledore's blindfold off to see the world for what it really is. An honorable man as my father described him."

Cassiopeia smiled at that, some more pleasantries later she excused herself and let herself be escorted back to the castle by Benedikt who was more than happy to accompany her. Alex meanwhile walked over to the last person left from the audience. Rose was still sitting there on her chair, silently watching what happened around her.

"So Rose, do you now understand better what we do and what we are?" She looked up as Alex stood next to her, an inner conflict visible in her eyes.

"I understand what your are... but... my own mother, my mother is a muggleborn. Am I not going against her, am I not betraying my own mother when I stand on your side? I would be a hypocrite, fighting against muggleborn when my own mother is one... I ... I don't know what to do..." She looked at him forlornly, sadly. The idea of Unity, the way the Covenant members supported each other, it all appealed to her greatly, but she couldn't just deny her own mother for this.

"Tell me, Rose. Has your mother embraced the magical way of life? Has she adapted to your fathers world when she married him? Or does she openly advertise the destruction of our culture like so many other muggleborn and their traitorous friends?"

"My mom loves the magical world. There are things she does not agree with, but she has never demanded that these things should be changed for her sake... she lives in this world and is happy with it..."

"Then she has nothing to fear from us unless she sides with the traitors. But having her daughter fight for our cause should greatly diminish the chances for her to side with Dumbledore and with that siding against you. Don't fear your own decisions, Rose. Every

decision you make will have consequences, some desirable, some unwanted. But there is always a price to pay for our decisions. What matters is that you follow your own path for your own sake and not to please others. Your parents won't be here for ever to watch over you." Alex looked at her with a reassuring smile, but the torn look still remained on the young girls face. "It is time for you to return to the castle, Rose." Alex turned around and looked at his fiancée standing a few feet away watching Rose with a concerned look. "Lilith, you and the others please escort her back to the castle. Unfortunately I have other pressing matters to attend now." Lilith simply nodded before she lead Rose out of the room, handing her a pamphlet on the way out, so the girl could read the Unity Theses while she considered her options for her future.

Alex meanwhile turned to Elena and Victor, a stern look on his face. "Things went well today, but I expect Dumbledore to act against us as soon as he hears about this gathering. We will deal with him, but better be prepared. We also need to finally find out what the first task will be. I won't have you enter the competition unprepared while the old fool most likely has already informed his own school champion about it. Elena, you and your teams keep an eye open for any clues. Victor you simply continue your training. Be prepared for anything, riddles, duels, killing monsters, I don't care, but be prepared." Elena and Victor simply nodded before both left Alex alone to fulfill their orders. Now Alex was all alone in the large room, heaving a deep sigh as he sat down in a chair. "Step 1 is almost complete. Now the trouble will start..."

As Lilith lead the younger girl away from the ship neither of them spoke a word. There was just some hushed talking from the other members of Liliths team walking some feet behind the two girls, but neither Lilith nor Rose had yet said a word. But seeing the uncomfortable look on the younger girls face Lilith decided to make the first step. "I know this all is a bit much to understand at once. It overwhelmed me as well when I was first confronted with this all. It was a hectic time for me back then, similar to your situation now. I had just been betrothed to Alex, because my parents wanted that political alliance and then he confronts me with his agenda and hidden plans and everything. But it didn't take long until I realized the full meaning of all this, of the Theses and the Covenant. You will understand, too, Rose."

"I don't know... I don't want to disappoint anyone. Not my parents, not my friend..., especially not Alex after he helped me so much even though we should be rivals in this Tournament..."

"You like Alex, don't you? Everyone does. He is a natural leader, people feel safe when he makes the decisions. Everyone loves him..." Lilith trailed a bit off at the last sentence, looking somberly.

"You really love him, don't you?" The younger girl asked innocently, not realizing what this meant for Lilith.

"I think so... I mean I am his fiancée because of a political alliance. Political marriages work even without love as long as every member of the agreement fulfills his or her duty... But sometimes even duty can turn into more..." Lilith blabbered on, not really getting to a point. "Anyways what I wanted you to understand is that Alex helped you because of how he is. He helps people, that is why he fights so hard. To create a world where people will no longer need his help, a better place for everyone. No matter what others tell you, Rose, we are not evil. And no matter what you decide, whether you join or not, it won't change a thing about Alex helping you survive this tournament."

Rose had a thoughtful, far away look on her face as they walked on, now once more in companionable silence until they reached the castle and Lilith bid Rose farewell.

Some more days passed by without major troubles, the gathering had just as expected gained them the attention of Dumbledore, but all his attempts at finding out the identities of all attending students of his school had been unsuccessful so far. The old wizard watched the Covenant closely for some days before he focused solely on Alex again, his stern scrutiny leaving no doubt that he had new plans for the Grindelwald heir, but what these plans were was unknown so far.

It was also now three days after the gathering that the first new Covenant members would swear their oath. All of the students that had come without cloaks were present as Rose once more sat on the chair at the side of the room to watch what would happen. Again was she hidden under the large crimson cloak and its hood to conceal her identity. Rose watched silently as the students stood there in front of the podium, waiting for their initiation.

Rose looked at each of the students intently, she saw the insecurity on Marcus Belby's face, the anticipation in Micheal Corner's every movement as he paced around. She saw Daphne Greengrass laughing at a joke made by Blaise Zabini, their fellow Slytherins Tracy Davis and Theodore Nott standing next to them, chuckling silently. She saw two of the French students from Beauxbatons conversing in French a bit away from the rest. And she also saw the first Gryffindor except herself that showed any interest in joining the Covenant. The fifth year Cormac McLaggen leaned against a nearby wall, a smug look on his face as he waited. Then Rose saw another person enter the room, somehow it did not surprise Rose to see Cassiopeia here, she seemed so at ease with Benedikt when she came here to listen to Alex speech.

Finally Alex and a few other Covenant members entered the room carrying gray metal blocks with blood red jewels on top. All present students crowded up front, looking curiously. Alex looked at all of them, one after another before he started talking to them. Rose heaved a deep sigh before she stood up and walked to the front to join the other students. She had made her decision and could only hope now that this was the right one. As she reached the front of the podium she discarded her cloak, causing several people to gasp when they realized who she was. Alex simply looked at her with an arched eyebrow, he had not really expected this. Lilith though smiled happily at the young girl, a smile Rose reciprocated fully. Things had started to change at Hogwarts, this day was just the beginning.

AN: This was really a difficult chapter for me to write. Not because I lacked ideas but more about the how should I present the speech. Took me three tries until I was somewhat satisfied with the speech, but in the end I think I have found a fitting way to introduce the agenda. I hope this clears up the confusion about the differences between Voldies kill everything agenda and Alex Unity Theses.

I know it is a bit sad that there is nothing about Durmstrang in this chapter, but it just wouldn't fit in. Instead I added a meeting between Dumbledore and Grindelwald. The last time I had them talk to each other was quite a while ago and I just love the way I have portrayed their relationship. Gellert mocking Albus, the two men who represent two sides, Gellert the dark and Albus the light side.

About the Hogwarts students that joined the Covenant this chapter, I have chosen some of them rather randomly, like Belby and Corner and others I have chosen purposely, like Greengrass and McLaggen. Some might ask why McLaggen, well I wanted a Gryffindor to join and McLaggen has this amazing potential to be a really annoying person. And that is just what he will do, be annoying.

That Cassiopeia and Rose joined at this time has good reasons, for Cassie I will write about them in later chapters, for Rose it is mostly her current situation. She is shunned by her school, abandoned by her friends and usually sheltered by her family. Then Alex and the Covenant come along, telling her about unity and showing her support when no one else would help her. Well I guess everyone can understand her decision and why she still feels torn despite that decision.

And finally the reason why I ended the chapter before they actually take the oath, well the exact wording of the oath will be important later on, but at the moment it would only be a distraction.

And as always please leave a Review.

Chapter 20: Dauntless

The days following the initiation of the first new Covenant members at Hogwarts were busy for Alex and his fellow students. Only one day after the first new members joined the covenant, another initiation took place, eleven more students joined the Covenant that day and by the looks the number would grow over time. Just a few days after Alex speech the Covenant had already gained 24 new members. But those members also had to be trained, a task that seemed harder then they had first anticipated. The Hogwarts and Beauxbatons students were far behind their Durmstrang peers in certain branches of their magical education and most of the students had as good as now physical training, causing them to lag behind.

It was another evening when the new members had returned to the ship, to receive their first lessons in combat magic from an overly bored Professor Kumiega. Due to the nature of her subject she was officially still at Durmstrang, so she was not allowed to leave the ship at any time. The British aurors would try to arrest her on the spot for teaching Dark Arts should they ever apprehend her here at Hogwarts. This arrest on the ship caused the professor to be bored most of the time, making her think up new training strategies that would cause her students to groan in exhaustion afterward.

"Okay, all of you listen up. This is Professor Kumiega, our instructor for combat magic. You know this branch under the defamatory name of the Dark Arts." All new Covenant members looked at the woman standing next to Alexander, the professor scrutinized her new students with an experts eye, already planing on how to approach the subject with these children.

"There is nothing bad or dark about learning how to defend yourself and the ones you love, so never fool yourself and believe the propaganda you have heard in your schools. Professor Kumiega will from now on instruct all of you in this subject, you can come whenever you like to train here in our training room, far away from prying eyes. But I expect each of you to at least show up 2-3 times a week or else you will make little progress. And all of you will receive tutoring on mind arts, especially Occlumency to shield your mind against meddling fools like Dumbledore." Some groaned at hearing this, seemingly reluctant to sacrifice more free time for another subject, but no one opposed openly, they all knew that this was for their own benefit.

"I will now walk around and assign you to certain teams, each team will get a Durmstrang student that will aid them with their training."

While Alex started his round Rose stood somewhat forlornly in the large room a bit aside from the others. But her small solitude was only short lived as another girl approached her. "My, my. I can't even begin to tell you how surprised I was when I saw you at the initiation, Rose. Quite the shock for all of us to see Dumbledore's pet project actually join a side that opposes the old man." Cassiopeia smirked at the younger girl, her words more amused then malicious.

"You wouldn't understand my reasons, Cassiopeia... I am still unsure of so many things, but I know I belong here... somehow."

Cassiopeia arched an eyebrow at that statement, a bit confused by the girls words. "Well it is good to see that at least one Potter is willing to see more then Dumbledore's idea of this world."

"The headmaster... he did nothing wrong... I was just... never important to him in any way. You can see it in his actions, not even once has he done anything to really help me. To him I am just a little girl, the unimportant twin sister of the dead savior of our world..."

Cassiopeia snorted at that. "Sure doesn't look that way to others. Everyone sees how your family follows the old man's commands like a group of trained puppies. And until now you seemed rather convinced of his infallibility." This caused Rose to narrow her eyes at Cassiopeia in anger about the apparent insult to her family.

"My family are not lapdogs... they are not..." Despite her anger, Rose words were weak and her resolve lost quickly.

"Look, Rose. Why do you think our fathers are at odds at the moment?" Rose could only shrug, she never understood why her uncle Sirius suddenly stopped visiting them. "My father has seen that Dumbledore's plans are less then ideal for most of us. But your father won't listen to him. I know it pains my dad to be angry with his best friend, but he will not return to be a mindless follower just for your fathers sake. Both our fathers are good men, but they believe in different things now, maybe with you leaving the old man's side your father will open his eyes. Then our fathers might return to being the good friends they had been in the past." Cassiopeia smiled sadly

at the young girl. "And maybe it will help you to finally grow a spine to stand up for yourself as well."

Rose looked at the older girl with a hopeful look. "Cassiopeia, would you... would you help me... to convince my family... They won't be too happy with my decision, but with your help and the help of your father they might accept it..."

Cassiopeia looked contemplative for some moments, but she couldn't respond because they had been interrupted by Alex appearance. "Okay ladies. Seems the two of you get along, so you will be in one group with two others." Alex looked around until he saw the other students he was looking for. "Hey McLaggen, Corner get your asses over here I told both of you to follow me." The two boys quickly walked over to them, looking sheepishly at Alex. Only moments before they had been engrossed in watching some spells the Professor was showing to the first group.

"Okay, now that all four of you are here I will continue. The four of you will be the last group. Two fourth and two fifth years, that shouldn't be too much of a problem. Okay now listen closely. We formed teams so the students have others to help them. This is not meant to promote rivalry between the different groups. I will not accept it when you start antagonizing fellow Covenant members." Alex looked pointedly at each and every one of them before he continued.

"Your group will be supported by a fellow year mate of mine, this girl waiting there will be the one you can always turn too whenever you need help. Her name is Silvia and I assure you she loves teaching other students." At this he saw the disappointment in Rose's eyes. "I know you expected me or Lilith to help your group Rose, but we are far too busy to aid you to the extent you will need. Believe me Silvia will be a splendid teacher."

Meanwhile Elena had just left the school building, closely followed by her team, all members ever vigilant to drag their leader away should they run into the Beauxbatons champion. Especially now when Elena was frustrated about her lack of progress in finding out the challenge for the first task. With only about a week left they had little time to spare, knowing what they would be up against would be a tremendous advantage. But so far they had found no clue within the castle, the teachers were especially tight lipped about the first

task whenever they saw the crimson cloaks of a Durmstrang student. To Elena there was no doubt that they all knew the secret and had already informed their own champion, poor Rose being ignored because of her unpopular training with the foreign guests.

They had searched the entire castle from the dungeons up to the highest tower, completing their task to map out the school in the progress, but they found nothing within Hogwarts walls. For Elena that left only one place to look. The schools so called 'Forbidden Forest'. The only place they had not looked at so far. Under the black cover of the encroaching moonless night they walked towards the treeline. They had once ventured closer to this part of the forest a few weeks ago, but British Aurors had stopped them almost immediately, telling them in less kind words to stay clear of the forest, all because they believe it to be dangerous.

They walked slowly, careful not to be found before they had at least a chance to see what the Brits were really hiding here. They had long passed the small hut that was the home of Hogwarts ground keeper and were slowly walking between the dark trees. A few minutes of walking later they stopped dead at the sound of screeching and the yelling of some men. Elena couldn't help but smirk, whatever they had found it was something the Brits tried to keep secret from them.

They came a bit closer to the sounds, staying hidden in the shadows, unseen by the large number of men running about in the small clearing before them. When Elena and her group saw what caused the screeching they could only stare in shock. "Dragons... who the fuck brings dragons to a place full of children? Unless..." Elena hissed silently, but only moments later they had been discovered by someone. Their attention had been on the magnificent creatures instead of their surrounding so they did not see the persons coming up behind them.

"Hey! What are you doing here, this ain't no place for kids. Wait a minute your are from that bunch of dark kids..." The booming voice of Hogwarts' ground keeper drew even more attention to the small group. Next to the extremely tall man stood and equally tall woman, the headmistress of Beauxbatons as Elena saw much to her dislike. Her assumptions were correct, the other two schools were cheating behind their backs.

"Shut your mouth, we were leaving anyways." Elena looked at the two persons with contempt. Hagrid looked unsure about what to do in this situation, headmistress Maxime though only glared at the girl that had caused her school such problems since their arrival.

"You can't just leave, you are not supposed to know about this, no champion is allowed to know beforehand..." Hagrid rambled on, the situation clearly out of his control.

"Try and stop us, lapdog. You believe you can cheat without our notice. We will not allow you to fool us any longer." Elena yelled at the man loud enough they could probably even hear them near the castle now. "And what would you do to stop us now? Obliviate us? Be sure that such a thing would be found out the moment we return to our ship and then your head will roll for such an attack on us. Or will you attempt to detain us for the week until the first task? I swear to you your entire school would be closed down long before the first task would begin. There is nothing you can do so get the fuck out of our way." Without waiting for a reply Elena pushed past the man and marched back to the ship with the rest of her group.

The news that they had finally found out what the first task was caused quite an uproar among the Durmstrang students, but after they had been told that Hogwarts and Beauxbatons had most likely told their champions about this long ago the entire atmosphere exploded. From their anger came an even greater resolve to win this tournament no matter what the costs would be. They would not let those who betrayed them like this make a fool out of their school. New plans were made for both Victor and Rose. To them she would not be a second Hogwarts champion but another Covenant champion. They would defeat the dragons and accomplish whatever they would have to do with these dangerous creatures.

A few days after she had begun her training Cassiopeia sat in the great hall, eating dinner, surrounded by the other Covenant members of her house. None of them were talking, there were little things they would talk about here at Hogwarts where their every word would sooner or later reach Dumbledore's ears. Especially now that some of them had been exposed as Covenant members thanks to Draco Malfoy's loud mouth when he once again complained about Alex opinion of the Dark Lord the day before. Cassiopeia expected Dumbledore to act, call them to his office or anything like that. But to her astonishment that did not happen.

Neither had she heard anything from her father so far, apparently he had not yet been informed. But that would only be a matter of time with her idiot brother.

Said brother was currently on his way towards the Slytherin table, an angry look on his face. Flanked by his red head sidekick and other Gryffindor cronies Antares even felt courageous enough to confront her at her house table, surrounded by fellow snakes and in front of the entire school.

"You!" He stopped next to her, pointing angrily at her. "How could you. How could join that bunch of dark wizards. Don't you have any shame? First the slimy snakes and now the Covenant... I always knew you were evil, ever since your I heard about your sorting I knew you had gone dark." His voice was loud, not yet a yell, but Cassiopeia knew that would change momentarily.

"Ah so the news have finally traveled all the way to the Gryffindor tower. I expected you to hear about it much earlier, you lions gossip like crones." She looked bemusedly at her younger brother, some others around her chuckling silently. "And now get lost Antares, before you make more of a fool out of yourself. Father would be displeased to hear that you managed once again to shame your family with your idiocy."

That was the last straw for Antares, now he launched into a fully enraged yelling fit. "Don't you dare talking about our father, you traitor. He will kick you out of the family for this. He will see that you and the rest of your criminal bunch land in Azkaban to rot." The bemused expression on Cassiopeia's face changed to an exasperated one while she listened to her brothers rant, not even one of the present professors making any move to stop the boy.

"Wow you really are as dumb as you make us all believe all day. First you accuse people you don't know to be dark just because you hear some rumor and then in the next step you call them criminals that should rot in prison even though they have never broken any law. You know what, just keep your mouth shut, your are neither good at talking nor thinking. The only thing you and your band of misfits here can actually do is bully small girls and even for that you need a full group. You are pathetic, Antares."

In his anger Antares pulled out his wand, his group following immediately. But they were not the only ones to react, nearly all Slytherin students had their wands out and aimed at the the small group of foolhardy Gryffindors. No matter what they are thinking about Cassiopeia, a Slytherin would never accept such a threat from their house rival. "You and your dark bunch are done for, Cassy." Antares smirked darkly at something, confusing Cassiopeia for a moment before she heard a voice behind her.

"Ms. Black, I must insist that you take down your wand immediately. I won't allow fights among my students." Dumbledore stood there, looking at her with his disappointed grandfather mask while Antares smirk grew even wider.

"Apparently you are blinded to your lapdogs actions, else you would have seen that Antares was the first to draw his wand. Lest I see that you are biased against some of your students, headmaster." She stressed the word headmaster especially, but Dumbledore seemed unaffected.

"As it seems a week of detention is in order here for disrespect of authority figures as well as 100 points from Slytherin. Now please put down your wand, Ms Black."

"No, headmaster. As I said you know no justice for all your students. Or is it because of my new affiliation? Is this a personal matter of yours?" She looked at the old wizard with an arched eyebrow. "But let me give you a real reason for punishment." Before anyone could act she sent a blasting curse at Antares, knocking him back into his group of cronies.

"Ms. Black that is an abominable action. That will be another month of detention and 100 points from Slytherin. You will return to your dorm now and not leave it until your next class starts." Dumbledore looked angrily at the girl, cursing the Covenant in his thoughts. They had already started to disunite his school.

"No, Mr Dumbledore. Expel me if you want, but I will no comply. Being threatened here and then punished for self defense... I see that my personal safety is not warranted here. Maybe I should advise my father to enroll me at Durmstrang, I know they would be delighted to have me. For now I will take my leave, I shall eat with the other Covenant members on the ship from now on."

Emphasizing the point of her affiliation with the Covenant caused Dumbledore to narrow his eyes in obvious anger. But Cassiopeia cared little about that. She slowly walked away, closely followed by the rest of the Slytherin Covenant members, smirking to herself.

Even though Alex had been rather busy these past weeks he did notice the changes in his sisters mannerisms. She was always on the edge, ready fight the next fool that said something wrong to her. It wasn't her usual protectiveness but rather something that unsettled her. It was easy to point his finger at Delacour and blame her for it, but Elena was bound to hurt herself sooner or later with this attitude.

"Elena, come here for a moment. We need to talk." One evening after all other students had already left for bed Alex found his sister alone in the large training room hurling spells at a dummy. Seeing her relentless assault on her target made Alex feel sorry for whatever poor fool who would end on the wrong end of her wand.

"What is it, Alex? I am training, can't you wait for a bit?" She looked rather irritated, she clearly did not want to talk, instead she wanted to vent her anger against that poor dummy.

"No. We need to talk now, Elena. Come here and sit down, you are already exhausted enough." Alex spoke in a commanding tone he rarely used when he was talking to his adopted sister, but it was the only way to get her to listen.

Elena huffed annoyed, but complied none the less and sat down next to Alex on one of the benches in the room. "Where is your fiancée?" She asked him with a snippy tone.

"Already in bed. Elena tell me what is wrong? Something is bothering you greatly, we all can see it. Everyone who knows you a bit can see that there is something going on in your head, hell even Rose could see it and she barely knows more about you then your name. Tell me what is wrong so I can help you."

"It is nothing. Don't worry on my account. You've got enough things to take care off, I can deal with my problems on my own." She looked away from him as she spoke, missing his unconvinced look.

"Sure does not seem like you can do it alone. And I am your brother, when something bothers you it is my duty to help you with it."

She snorted a bit at this. "You don't have to do anything just because we are siblings now. I can deal with my problems on my own."

"Is this because of Delacour?"

"That is none of your business, Alex." She was about to stand up but Alex held her back with a hand firmly on her shoulder.

"It is my business. You may not have told me every detail of your shared past with that family but I know enough to know that I won't let you deal with them alone. You are no longer alone, Elena. Don't push people away when they try to help you."

"Just being in the same area as that bitch... it makes me angry to see her prance around like everything belongs to her. Seeing her shame her heritage, part veela or not. She does not even try to control her allure around others, making them lust after her as if she is a common whore. All those poor fools that don't protect their minds are affected by that and she does not even care. She must love it... she has no respect for her heritage." Mid rant Elena had started to yell, yell it all out. "And now it is just a matter of time before her mother shows up to play the benevolent aunt... they make me sick."

"We deal with them when they show up. But you will stop trying to solve this on your own. We are all here to help you. If you continue trying to solve all on your own I will send you back to Durmstrang, because then it would be obvious that this situation is too much for you to handle emotionally. I won't watch you suffering." With these final words Alex stood up and left for his own room, leaving behind a shocked Elena.

The day of the first task came quickly. The sky was gray, a somber atmosphere hanging over Hogwarts. They never found out whether Dumbledore cared for their discovery of the dragons or not. The old man could barely be seen during the last few days after his confrontation with Cassiopeia. Ominous people had been seen coming and leaving his office, but no one really knew what the man was up to. Whatever he was planing this time, Alex was happy that

Dumbledore did not try to meddle with their preparations for the task and the training of their new members.

The mood in the champions tent before the task was quite tense. Alex was the only one except the champions present at the moment, standing in a corner of the tent with Rose and Victor giving last advice. "Remember what we talked about, Victor. Go for the kill, do it quick, no need to waste time." Alex had said that loud at purpose, earning him shocked looks from Fleur and Cedric. Both seemed to know about the dragons and were obviously shocked by the idea to actually defeat such a beast.

Rose giggled a bit, earning her a glare from Fleur which she ignored completely. "Don't let the bitch bother you Rose. If we are lucky she will be burned to crisp before the day is over." Victor laughed at the thought.

"Don't get our hopes up, Alexander. I hope I can watch her make a fool out of herself. I am curious who gets which dragon. Let's hope Rose gets that small Welsh Green." Victor replied.

"Yeah, I hope so, too. If those idiots had any brains they would give her that dragon. They already force her to compete, at least they should make it easier for her to survive." Alex looked concerned at the small red head next to him. "Rose, whatever dragon you get, remember my words. Don't risk your life for this stupid tournament. If you can't fulfill your task then give it up. No one will think less of you. They force you start the task but no one said how you have to end it." Rose nodded silently, uncertainty and slight fear present on her face.

Moments later Ludo Bagman entered the tent with a small bag in his hand. "Ah, everyone is here, wonderful. Now I have been informed that everyone here already knows about the dragons... pity we wanted it to be a surprise. Alas maybe the show will be more spectacular this way. You all will get a dragon by drawing a model of your opponent from this bag. Once you are all set with a dragon we will call you out when it is time for you. Your objective will be to recover the golden egg in the center of the ring, but be warned the dragons are nesting brood mothers and will fiercely protect their eggs from intruders. Afterward we judges will mark you based on your time, method and success."

He then took his bag and held it open. "Oh well then let us start with our guests, Ms Delacour if you would please draw your dragon." Fleur stepped forward and put her hand in the bag almost reluctantly as if she feared it could bite her. Moments later she pulled out the model of a small green dragon with a number two tag around its neck. "Ah the Welsh Green. You will start as second place, Ms Delacour. Now Mr Krum." As Victor walked forward he bumped on purpose into Fleur, pushing her back a bit. He quickly pulled something from the bag and soon looked at a small figurine of a Chinese dragon with a number three tag around its neck. "The Chinese Fireball, excellent. You will start third Mr Krum." Victor groaned a bit in disappointment, this would mean he could not see the dragon chew on Delacour...

Alex watched the proceedings a bit worried, now there were only two rather wild dragons left and Rose would get an opponent that might be far to strong for her. Of course that French bint had to get the easiest dragon for herself...

"Well then, Mr Diggory please." Cedric seemed almost reluctant to get his dragon, when he withdrew his hand from the bag he held a small figurine with a number one tag. "The Swedish short-snout, very temperamental." For a moment Bagman looked at Rose when it dawned on him what this meant for the young girl. "And this means you will stand against the Hungarian Horntail, Ms Potter. You will start last." Bagman saw Alexander's displeased look only for a moment before he made a hasty retreat.

"You've got to be kidding me. These people sure are beyond saving, they are just too dumb. A Horntail and a Welsh Green in the same competition and they call that fair?" Alex could only shake his head, to him this all was utter bullshit. And poor Rose looked even paler then before, the model of her dragon that Bagman gave her moments before roared at her menacingly. One wrong move and the real dragon would tear her apart. "Rose, remember what I told you. It is no shame to give up. When it is your turn you can try to get the egg, but should the dragon be too strong don't risk anything. It is not worth it." He gave her shoulder an encouraging squeeze, but it helped her little against her fear. "I have to go up now. Good luck, both of you." Reluctantly Alex left the tent to go to his place on the stands.

Diggory performed his task rather well against an mostly sleepy dragon. With a bit of transfiguration to distract the dragon he got his egg eventually, even though he still got hit by the dragons flames and looked a bit burnt when he hobbled out of the ring.

Then came Delacour's dragon. The almost docile Welsh Green. At least this dragon seemed lucid and fought back properly. The beasts struggle against the French part Veela was accompanied by many cheers, people enjoying the show. Even Elena cheered though when someone asked why she cheered for the person she hates the most she only snapped back that she cheered for the dragon, not the bitch. Much to Elena's disappointment Fleur left the ring mostly unhurt and with the golden egg.

Then it was time for Victor's great show. He marched confidently into the ring, facing his dragon without fear. The Chinese Fireball roared at him and started shooting fireballs from its mouth at the Bulgarian student. Victor quickly leaped to the side behind a large boulder. After a moments deliberation he left his cover, the dragon growling at him, but at the moment it did not unleash its fiery fury. This moment of peace was all Victor needed. With a swish of his wand he caused a large stone to float next to him before he banished it at the dragon. But the stone did not hit the dragon but the long chain that was slung around the dragons neck to keep it from escaping. This shortened the chain and limited the dragons ability to move around significantly. Angry about this the dragon roared loudly before it resumed his burning onslaught against Victor. But he already had another stone floating next to him and copied his earlier action. Victor repeated that several times, running from cover to cover, banishing boulders against the chain, sometimes hitting the dragon with a stone. In the end the dragons was pinned to the ground by its chain, the rest of its body twisting around furiously in an attempt to free itself. It would break free eventually, but by then Victor had already claimed his egg and left the ring, the Durmstrang students and many others cheering loudly for him.

At last came the moment Alex and most other Covenant members had dreaded. Now it was Rose's turn against one of the most dangerous and vicious creatures on this world at the moment. The Horntail was much wilder then the other three dragons, the dragon handlers had obvious problems to get the beast into the ring and chain it down so it cannot fly around and attack the other students.

Even those students that had shown Rose nothing but scorn the weeks before couldn't help but pity the young girl, seeing that she had an almost impossible task ahead of herself. As the handlers placed the golden egg in the center of the ring the dragon immediately went to cover it, chasing the handlers away with its fiery breath.

"And now representing Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Rose Potter will face the Hungarian Horntail." Bagman's announcement was less enthusiastic than for the other champions, even a simple man like him knew that this was bound to go terribly wrong.

Rose stepped inside the ring with much hesitation. At first she couldn't see her dragon so she slowly stepped further into the ring until she could already see the golden egg in the center. With no sign of the dragon anywhere she tried to run towards her goal, but the moment she was out in the open of the ring the dragon's barbed tail almost hit her as the dragon started his attack against the young girl. The dragon circled around her like an enemy trying to corner its prey, that was all Rose was to the beast, helpless prey. Rose barely managed to evade another attack from the dragon's tail, closely followed by a storm of fire that erupted from the dragon's mouth.

The entire stadium was deadly silent, all watching Rose struggle against the dragon with a morbid fascination. Alex watched with growing worry, seeing that Rose had no real chance to finish this task. "Rose, get out of there this is madness. It is not worth it." His yell could be heard in the entire stadium, many people turning towards the young Grindelwald. Rose did not hesitate to comply with Alex's earlier order and tried to make her way out of the ring only to be hit by the dragon's flames. With her burned left leg she was forced to cower behind a large boulder.

"This is over, do something to end this, Dumbledore." Alex yelled at the older wizard who sat with the other judges a few feet away from him. But the old man only stroked his beard with a contemplative look on his face.

"I am afraid we cannot interfere until she has her egg, the magical contract for this tournament is strict that the champion shall not receive aid."

Enraged by the old wizards reluctance to take action Alex executed his own plan for such a situation as they had anticipated things could go awry. To them this was the worst case scenario for the first task and he really did not understand the old mans reasoning. "Benedikt!" Alex yelled across the stand of the Durmstrang students. Benedikt just nodded and gave the signal for the rest of the Covenant members and moments later more then a dozen Covenant members jumped down into the ring to confront the dragon. "Lilith, stay with Elena and her group." He then turned to his sister. "Keep an eye on the old goat, don't let him meddle." Without waiting for a reply he jumped into the ring to follow his comrades. "First wave, just as we have planed, surround the beast. We must take it down. Silvia get Rose out of the ring." All complied immediately as they approached the raging beast.

Meanwhile Benedikt waited outside the ring with the rest of the Covenant members. "Second wave, prepare for the sign to switch places." He watched with worry as his friends battled the enraged dragon.

The Covenant members in the ring had long surrounded the dragon, shooting a wide variation of spells against the dragon, but its thick hide blocked most of the damage. Only the spells that hit the dragon's more vulnerable throat and belly caused a reaction from the dragon, though its reaction was mostly to breathe fire against the attacking students. In its rage the dragon even managed to break free from the chain that forced him to the ground.

Most Hogwarts and Beauxbatons students quickly fled the stadium as the beast broke free. Only the Covenant members of the schools remained, watching the escalating fight with growing worry. Even Karkaroff watched his students fearfully and extremely pissed at Dumbledore. "Do something god dammit. We must help them, Dumbledore. They are in there to aid one of your students, ONE OF YOURS and you don't even consider ending this pathetic task. If it were more of your students in danger you would act. I swear if one of them dies because of you I will see to it that you are destroyed old fool." Lilith couldn't help but smile at the High Master's outburst. He was at odds with Alex that was no secret but he knew he would be done for as well should anyone die here.

Benedikt saw the signs that the first students of the first wave were slowly exhausting themselves against the dragon so he prepared his

group to step in and relieve them and to finish the fight. Just as Alex shot a red ball of light into the air the second wave moved out to jump into the ring. But to their shock they were held back, an invisible wall hindering them from jumping down to aid their comrades. Angrily Benedikt looked around only to see Dumbledore with his wand out.

"Dumbledore, what the fuck do you think you are doing? Stop this shield at once, we must aid our friends, they need us." Benedikt yelled at the old wizard, only seconds away from losing his self control and starting to hex the man no matter the consequences.

"I cannot allow more students to place themselves in danger. This has already gone too far." The old man even looked as if he was sorry about it, but Benedikt would have none of it. He would have started a yelling match with the man wasn't it for Lilith stopping him.

"Benedikt, the champions tent, the entrance should still be open. Don't you just stand there, go!" Lilith screamed almost frantically before she looked down worriedly at her fiancée and his comrades.

Down in the ring Alex frowned as he saw the failed attempt of his friends to come to their aid. He should have known that Dumbledore would somehow try to fuck this up. The old man wasn't dumb enough to try and kill him this way, it would be his own doom, no this was a freaking test. The old man wanted him to show his true strength, to reveal what he and his comrades were capable of. And now he had no choice but show the old man. He scowled darkly at this, but he had to do this or they would be finished. With a flick of his wand he sent an overpowered cutting curse at the dragon's wings, hitting one dead center, ripping it apart, causing the dragon to fall back to the ground, roaring in pain. There was no saving for the dragon, the beast was too enraged to be kept alive now, they had to kill it.

With shock he had to watch two of his comrades being hit by the dragon's tail; they were thrown through the air before they hit the ground hard, not moving. Some others were almost hit by the dragon's flaming breath, causing them to sport several painful burns. The beast was totally out of control, it would utterly destroy them all if they got no reinforcements soon.

As Benedikt and the rest of the Covenant arrived in front of the entrance to the champions tent they were faced with the next obstacle. A group of British Aurors were guarding the entrance, blocking it without any intention to let them through.

"Get lost, we have orders. No one but the champions and officials are allowed to enter here." The Auror sneered at Benedikt, not realizing that the boy he just antagonized could kill him easily if he wanted to.

"You fucking Brits, this is all Dumbledore's plot to kill the Grindelwald heir. I swear if even one of my friends dies in there I will see to it that your country burns. You all will pay. Get out of they way."

The Aurors looked slightly intimidated by the angry Russian boy, especially when they were suddenly faced with about thirty Durmstrang students aiming their wands at them, the intention to kill visible in their faces.

"Stand down, Dawlish. Let them pass." James Potter yelled at the man that had sneered at Benedikt. James had just arrived at the scene, to his anger he had been called to the ministry that morning and only returned moments earlier to hear frantic students telling him that his daughter was hurt by a raging dragon and that Grindelwald and his followers were fighting the monster at the moment.

"But Captain, we have orders from the Headmaster..."

"He is not your boss, I am. Let them pass, Dawlish." James did not know what they were about to do, but hearing that they were protecting his daughter was enough for him to trust them for the moment.

The Aurors quickly stepped aside at their superiors orders and let the foreign students pass. Benedikt gave a respectful nod towards James before he quickly vanished inside the tent together with the rest of the students. James followed them closely with the other Aurors only to see the gruesome battlefield. Most of the Aurors were stunned by the sight, while James looked around searching for his daughter. He could see several students lying around, some unmoving, other clutching different wounds while their comrades continued their relentless assault on the dragon. Then James saw

one unhurt Durmstrang student huddled over another unmoving form on the ground, which to his shock turned out to be his own daughter. The female student cast some sort of healing spell on a large burn wound on the Rose's chest and leg. James quickly hurried over, yelling at one of his Aurors to fetch the school nurse. The Durmstrang student let James take over watching Rose before she hurried to aid her own comrades in the battle.

Benedikt quickly went next to Alex, his wand in hand as he cast his first spell against the dragon, a flaming whip that slung around the dragons neck, burning the beasts skin. "Hah glad you could make it, Benedikt." Relief was evident in Alex voice as he saw his friend and the rest of the Covenant members storming into the ring to aid them.

"Yeah sorry. Some old goat found it funny to watch you all die in here. Once this dragon is down the old man is the next on my to kill list."

Alex let out an exhausted laugh before he returned his attention back to the dragon. He was the only one of the first wave that remained in the battle, the others were either too hurt or too exhausted to continue fighting. Some of the new arrivals quickly tended to their fallen comrades, levitating them out of the immediate combat zone so they wouldn't be hurt further as they fight continued. By now even Victor had arrived in the ring, originally he was told to stay out of the fight since he would be exhausted after facing his own dragon alone, but seeing this even the stoic Bulgarian couldn't stay away and watch his comrades getting hurt.

"Okay you two, distract that lizard, I will finish it off. Try to tie it down somehow." He turned to the rest of his comrades around him waiting for further orders instead of throwing more spells at that beast. "Go for its legs, cut them, break them I don't care, stop its movements. But watch out for its tail."

Everyone quickly complied with their orders, Benedikt and Victor casting their strongest spells, mostly aimed at the head of the beast. Alex meanwhile had his wand in his left hand as his sword appeared in the other as he quickly ran towards the dragon. His magic was exhausted by now but his physical strength was still sufficient to take the monster out if he got close enough.

Alex could hear Lilith screaming at him from outside the ring in shock as he evaded the dragons tail by rolling on the ground before he jumped back to his feet. He saw the dragon go down as its legs were crushed under the onslaught of spells from the attackers. Only moving its head and tail the dragon still tried to maim Alex as he was almost in striking range. The dragon opened its mouth wide to send its fiery breath against Alex, but before it got a chance a large boulder impacted with the dragon's head, forcing it to the side so it missed Alex. Not missing his chance Alex quickly attacked the dragons exposed neck, slicing it open with his sword, the dragons usually strong skin raw and broken by the many spells the dragon had to endure. With a gurgling sound the beast tried to get up for one last attack, but its wounds made most movements impossible now, there wasn't even enough strength left to raise its tail.

Alex placed his sword at the base of the dragons neck. "Forgive me noble dragon." As much as he wanted to defeat the dragon he did not want to kill it like this, there were already so few dragons left, but in this situation he had no other choice. "Dumbledore be damned to the deepest layers of hell for this." He raised his sword again before he brought it down with magically enhanced strength and cut through the dragons neck, almost cutting off the dragons head in one strike.

It was over, the beast was slain. They were save for the moment. Now it was time to tend to the wounded... and to make a certain meddling old man pay for almost killing them with his stunt when they tried to save one of his students. He quickly walked back to Benedikt and Victor, he could also see that all hurt Durmstrang students were lined up at the far end of the ring where they were out of the way. Some of the unhurt students tending to their wounds as good as their basic healing classes allowed them to help.

"Good work, everyone. Be proud of this day, not many can claim they had a hand in slaying a dragon." Some managed to smile proudly, but most were busy, their minds elsewhere. Suddenly Alex found himself in firm embrace of two women, one being his sister, the other his fiancée, both looking equally worried and slightly angry for being told to stay out of the fight. Elena eventually let go of him, smiling slightly, but Lilith still held onto him as if he would vanish the next moment. Seeing that she would not let go soon Alex turned his head towards his comrades around him. "Benedikt, take those who are hurt beyond our capabilities back to Durmstrang, I don't trust the

Brits after this. Bring replacements for those who cannot return anytime soon and bring me a full report on the wounded you take home." The young Russian quickly nodded and went over to the lined up wounded students. "Victor, you take the rest of our comrades and bring them back to the ship, don't leave it before I say so. We are not safe here."

After Victor had left Alex turned back to the two girls next to him. "I was kind of distracted, what did the old goat do except trying to get us killed?"

"Nothing much but watch. You should have seen Karkaroff, he was livid, yelling at Dumbledore the whole time. He was only moments from cursing the old fool." Elena said with a smirk.

"Who would have thought. Igor still has a heart for his students. Maybe we should give him a special treat for being a nice pet Death Eater." They all chuckled a bit, though it was harder for Alex with Lilith still clinging onto him. With his free hand he tilted her chin upwards, seeing the worry still in her eyes. "Hey, don't worry Lilith. I am still alright and as it seems we were lucky enough to have no deaths on our side." He gave her a chaste kiss, startling her a bit with it so she let go of him.

"Unfortunately the old fucker put up that barrier seconds after you jumped down, he might claim he simply tried to stop more students to jump into danger, playing his worried grandfather role. Here in Britain no one will think badly of him because of this." Elena said with a sneer.

"Not in Britain, but in the ICW he is finished after this, we will see to that." Alex said with some determination.

"I can guarantee you I had no ill intentions Mr Grindelwald. No need to involve the politicians because of this unfortunate accident." Out of nowhere the old man had appeared, playing his role as usual. "May I ask where you are taking your wounded? Our school nurse can surely take care of them. Else we can always call for additional healers from St Mungos."

"Pity I trust neither your quack nor the healers from your hospital. We have enough own healers at Durmstrang to take care of these

students well being. Now get lost before I do something I might regret later." With this Alex pushed past Dumbledore, closely followed by Lilith and Elena, both sneering at the headmaster.

Alex walked over to where the school nurse had just finished treating Rose to the point where she could be transported to the hospital wing without problems. Alex looked worriedly at the small girl, her left leg and parts of her chest had been burned by the dragon, numerous cuts and bruises were allotted all over her body.

As the girl was brought away the nurse turned around and saw Alex who had almost as many cuts and bruises as Rose had. She scowled before she raised her wand at him and quickly cast a diagnostic spell, but she was interrupted before it was finished when she suddenly had two irate witches pointing wands at her. "Get the hell away from him you quack. We can take care of ourselves." With this words the three passed the shocked nurse and left to return to their ship.

The small parchment with the first results of her diagnostic spell was completely forgotten by all of them until Dumbledore picked it up, eager to see if he could gain some information about the Grindelwald heir that were useful to him. His eyes widened dramatically as he read the short summary. "Two scars..." He whispered in disbelief.

At Durmstrang the day had been awfully quiet, no one there knew of the fierce battle their comrades were fighting at Hogwarts at the same moment. Ivanna was outside on the school grounds with Astris, trying to teach the small Nymph some tricks for dueling.

"No, Astris. Don't just stand there and throw spells around. Movement is the key. Your shield will only hold for a certain amount of time before it collapses. Not getting hit is important."

"But why my shield is strong enough to block your spells." Astris whined loudly.

Exasperated Ivanna sent a strong curse against the younger girls shield, collapsing it before she knocked the Nymph unconscious with the following stunner. Ivanna could only sigh, Astris had not even seen the second spell coming at all. Awareness would be the next thing she would have to train the girl at. She quickly cast an

Enervate to wake the girl up, causing her to laugh loudly when she saw the scowl on the young girl's face.

"Ouch that hurt... meanie. You could have warned about raising the tempo of your attacks you know."

Ivanna just shook her head. "An opponent in a real battle does not announce it either when he changes his tactic. Get off the ground, we still have much to work on." This caused Astris to groan.

Moments later Arvid came running with a frantic look on his face. "Ivanna, come quick. You are needed at the school's hospital. Your brother has just returned with some others." Ivanna suddenly looked extremely worried before she ran off in the direction of the hospital, her thoughts filled with worry about her brother. What could have happened that he had to return here to be treated in the hospital? Arvid and Astris followed Ivanna closely as they hurried towards the large white building.

Once Ivanna had arrived at the hospital she could see the doctors and nurses running around, tending to students in various states of injury. Some looked half dead, their uniforms long discarded to get better access to the wounds, the crimson cloaks lying on the ground in shreds. Ivanna heard a loud gasp behind her, seeing Astris looking extremely pale as she saw the entire scene.

"Arvid, get Astris out of here. This is no place for small kids." Her tone was commanding, but fear was evident in every word. Fear for her friends that were lying her hurt, fear for her brother whom she had not found so far and fear for her friends still at Hogwarts.

"Ivanna!" Benedikt suddenly came out of one of the treatment rooms, looking relieved as he saw his sister for the first time in almost a month.

"Benedikt! What the hell has happened? Are you hurt? Where are Alex and the others? Just what is going on?" Her quick questions were almost frantic, the usually calm and almost icy Russian girl now looking to be on the verge of tears.

Her brother embraced her tightly in an attempt to sooth her. "Dumbledore is responsible for this. We had to kill a rabid dragon to protect one of our new recruits, we had it all planned out, but the

moment we tried to aid the first of our comrades that fought the beast the old man interfered. Because of him our reinforcements came much too late... All those badly hurt students were part of the first wave that attacked the dragon."

"What about Alex and the others?"

"Alex was with the first wave, but he is alright. Nothing that the devoted attention of his fiancée couldn't heal. Victor is a bit exhausted, otherwise he is alright. Elena and Lilith stayed out of the fight on Alex orders..."

Behind them Rebecca cleared her throat to get their attention. "Ivanna, I gathered information from the healers... We have nineteen students in need of medical care, seven have extensive wounds and will need to be treated here for several more weeks before they can be released. Nine have minor burns and broken bones and need to stay at least over night for recuperation. The other three only have minor burns and can be discharged in about an hour, but they are ordered to take it easy for a few days to give their wounds time to heal."

"Thank you, Rebecca." Ivanna let go of her brother and heaved a deep sigh, trying to compose herself again. "Dumbledore will pay for this. He is lucky no one was killed."

"Yeah, Alex said that as well. I heard him say he wants to use this to get Dumbledore out of the ICW before I came here."

Moments later Arvid had returned, looking disturbed by the scenes around him. "Ivanna, you are needed outside. Word has spread about the wounded students and now most students and teachers are outside the hospital waiting for a statement from you."

"Give me a moment, Arvid. I will address them." She quickly walked down the corridor towards the front door of the hospital, closely followed by Benedikt and Arvid, Rebecca had immediately returned to gathering information for Ivanna so they could plan their next steps carefully.

"Ivanna we will need replacements for the wounded students. We cannot show weakness at Hogwarts, as things are right now that school will turn into a battlefield soon."

Ivanna just nodded before she stepped through the entrance to see the masses of students and teachers waiting outside. Every single soul at Durmstrang must have been waiting there as Ivanna prepared herself mentally to inform them about what had happened. The people looked shocked as they saw Benedikt with her, no one expected him to be back from Hogwarts so soon.

"My friends, you have come here because the rumors have spread quickly about wounded students being brought back to our school for treatment. This rumor is indeed correct. Today our brothers and sisters at Hogwarts have valiantly fought a rabid dragon to protect a fellow member of the Covenant." This caused many gasps from the crowd, those who had close friends or family members going to Hogwarts looked extremely worried.

"Many of our numbers got hurt, some only lightly while other had been less fortunate and have been brought back here for treatment. It was the meddling of Albus Dumbledore that caused our students to be hurt. Nineteen of them are now here for treatment, seven of them won't leave the hospital for weeks to come." Angry yells erupted from the group, anger replacing their worry of most students.

"Please remain calm for now, we will bring the old man to justice. We will see to it that he loses all his powers in the ICW because of this incident, so whatever you can contribute to achieve this goal please come to me later so we can coordinate our strategy." Benedikt looked impressed about how his sister handled the people.

"For the moment I need volunteers. At least twelve of our students cannot return to Hogwarts as soon as they are needed. I need twelve volunteers to take their places at Hogwarts. Sixth and seventh years only." The resonance was astonishing, almost every remaining sixth and seventh year student wanted to go and aid their friends.

"I will decide who goes and who stays this evening at dinner. I will also bring information about who was hurt and is currently treated here so you can know if your friends or family members are alright. For now please return to your classes, there is nothing you can do here, you would be in the healers' way if you went in there." The crowd slowly dispersed, most of them seemingly content with the way things were handled.

Benedikt whistled impressed. "Wow, we are gone for a few months and you already control this school like a seasoned pro. Well done, sister."

"I've had enough experience these past months. Karkaroff's deputy is a lazy asshole who does nothing. I've been running this school with the help of Arvid and Rebecca."

"Alex will be glad to hear that you have found a way to keep the school running. He was worried things might go awry here in his absence."

"Don't worry, the school won't burn down, there had been some minor problems but we are working at resolving them by the time you return from Hogwarts. But I have to admit I will miss the office and the secretary."

At Benedikt's questioning look Arvid had pity on him and elaborated. "Ivanna has hijacked Karkaroff's office and works from there most of the time. The High Master's secretary was also most helpful so far." At this Benedikt could only laugh, Karkaroff would throw a fit if he knew this.

"Well maybe we should retreat to your office so we can talk and plan." Ivanna quickly agreed so both left the hospital for the moment closely followed by Arvid. Rebecca would know where to find them once she has new information for them and Ivanna really needed a drink now after all this.

AN: Ah well after the break I started with a rather violent chapter, many fights, much yelling and threats. I know it might all be a bit much at the moment, but the situation at Hogwarts is really bad and I tried to show this.

I also know I might have depicted Dumbledore as too aggressive in this chapter, his actions against Cassiopeia might seem a bit over the top. Also his actions during the first task might seem equally exaggerated but I want all of you to understand that the old man is in a somewhat desperate situation. He knows that Gellert had influenced Alexander and fears that Alex plan was something equally sinister as the plan of the old Grindelwald. He wants to stop Alex and his group of dark wizards before they grow too powerful so

he tries to counteract their every move, discourage people from joining him and of course he tries to weaken the Covenant to get a better chance at converting Alex to the light. At least that is the implied idea behind his behavior, I don't know if it showed during the last chapters, but I guess due to the longer break between chapters 19 and 20 some of the things might have been forgotten.

And yeah I know I show Antares as a really biased asshole at this point of the story. Well it might be influenced by my own dislike of Gryffindor and the general fact that I want to have an obvious example of light side bias. In most stories Ron plays this role, but he gets bashed so often, I just decided to use an OC for this, especially one with a sister in the snake house. Don't get me wrong, Ron is an ass too, the way he treats Rose is far from good, but at least I tried to give him some justification for his actions, namely his sisters death.

Okay that is it, don't know when the next chapter is ready, but it might take some time, though not as long as this chapter.

Oh and flammers will be ignored, go back to your kindergarten, really it was sometimes hilarious to read those messages. One special fellow even called me a homophobe because this story is not a slash story... really pathetic.

And as always please leave a Review.

Chapter 21: Aftermath

Ivanna sighed deeply as she sat down behind the desk in her office. The beginnings of a headache were already noticeable and there was still so much for her to do. "You know how much work this whole incident means for us here at the school, Benedikt?"

Her brother sat in a chair in front of the desk while Arvid had resumed his usual place, standing next to Ivanna to aid her when needed. "I am worried about the others at Hogwarts right now. I must return as soon as possible with the reinforcements. God knows how far Dumbledore is willing to go. Now that we are temporarily weakened at that school he might try to pull something." Benedikt frowned when he thought about the old goat and what he had caused this day. Benedikt swore himself he would find a way to make that man suffer for what he did.

"I will have the reinforcements ready by lunch tomorrow. Do you want to stay until then or shall I send them after you?"

"I need the information about all wounded, the extent of their wounds, the time their recuperation will take and so on. Alex wants those information so I guess I will have to wait until tomorrow." Benedikt did not look very happy about this, in fact he scowled at the mere thought of leaving his friends side in such a situation but he had orders to follow.

"This will be a nightmare by tomorrow, I swear. We need to send notifications to the parents of the wounded students, we will have to distribute portkeys to the families that wish to come here to visit their children, we need to give a press statement about this before Dumbledore can claim it was an unfortunate accident..." Ivanna continued her rant for a few more minutes before she became quiet again. "How could things become this bad, Benedikt? This was supposed to be a competition between schools, but the way it looks to me it is more an open war against Dumbledore and his followers."

"More like a cold war... at least until the first task. Things will become a little more quiet and relaxed now, at least I hope it will. The public eye will be on Hogwarts in the near future, even Dumbledore cannot repeat such actions now, unless he wants to loose all his power. Sadly that also means I cannot break his neck any time soon..."

"I am just glad that no one died... and that you all are alright. I don't want to loose my friends just because a delusional old man thinks he is god and can fuck up peoples lives for his greater good." Ivanna looked sadly at a picture she had placed on the desk, the picture showing herself, her brother and her closest friends only a few days after this term had started. The room was silent for a few moments before a knock on the door shook Ivanna out of her sad reverie.

As Rebecca entered the room she could almost feel the somber atmosphere in there. Benedikt still sat on his chair looking glumly out of the large window behind the desk, while Ivanna and Arvid looked expectantly at Rebecca.

"I have the final reports from our healers. All wounded are out of immediate danger, some will retain permanent scars but all else will heal with time. As we had first predicted twelve students need to stay in hospital for some more days, seven of the for at least another month. The rest will be discharged tomorrow morning after a good nights rest."

"Thank you, Rebecca. I am glad we won't have to deal with deaths on our side any time soon. Can you and Arvid please start preparing letters for the parents of the wounded students that will remain in our hospital?" Ivanna tried to look a bit more relieved, but worry was still evident in her face.

"Of course. I will start immediately." Rebecca hesitated for a moment, looking unsure whether there was more she should say or not. In the end she opted for telling, even though Ivanna already looked troubled enough. "Ivanna, someone should also look after Astris, I don't think she is feeling too well after seeing the wounded in the hospital." At the last part Rebecca glared at Arvid whom she blamed for the small girls presence there in the first place.

"I will take care of that once I have the time for it, thank you." Rebecca gave a small bow before she quickly left the room with an apologetic Arvid in tow. Now only Ivanna and Benedikt remained in the room. "Go and take a rest, brother. You look dead on your feet after that fight and you will need your strength tomorrow. I will have someone bring you food to your room should you be hungry."

"Are you really alright by yourself, Ivanna?" Benedikt knew he was exhausted, he fought falling asleep for quite some time now, but he didn't want to abandon his sister with so many duties all by herself.

"I am fine, I am already used to doing these jobs. As I said we students run the school now, the deputy and the rest of staff have no intention to interfere what so ever. Take your rest, you can help me tomorrow, but right now you are no help at all." With a wave of her hand Ivanna casually dismissed her brother.

"Alright, sister. Don't overexert yourself. Good night." He stood up and slowly left the office. As he headed to his dorm room he couldn't help but recognize how well his sister seemed to cope with her duties. Maybe he should consult Alex about this once he returned to Hogwarts, but for now he would be glad to see his room and sleep in his bed here at Durmstrang for the first time in almost a month.

At Hogwarts things had quieted down a lot in the hours after the first task. Alex sat on his bed still in deep thought about today's tragedy. So far he had heard nothing from Benedikt and the wounded students he had sent back to Durmstrang, but he hoped that none of them had died. If one of them died it would be his fault, he ordered them to attack the dragon. There was of course the undeniable guilt of Dumbledore for messing up their strategy, but ultimately Alex knew it would be his responsibility.

He sighed deeply as he looked around his room before his eyes fell on the sleeping form next to him on the bed. For more than an hour Lilith had devoted all her time and energy to healing his every wound he sustained. The cuts and bruises were only small and not really dangerous, but she still had not stopped before she had found even the last of the wounds and healed it. A smile crept on his face as he thought about her worry for his safety. She looked so scared when he saw her during his last attack on the dragon. He could not deny that they had grown rather close since their parents had decided their betrothal, but how close was a question neither Alex nor Lilith were willing to answer so far. But he knew he would do his utmost to ensure her safety, she and Elena had become some of the most important people in his life next to his parents.

And through that his thoughts returned to the present danger. Dumbledore and his ilk. The old man had shown them this day how dangerous he is, god knows how far he would be willing to go in

order to reach his goal. Once Benedikt had returned he would have to talk with his inner circle about preemptive measures to protect all Covenant members, those from Durmstrang and those from the other schools as well. Dumbledore had already started acting against the Covenant in his own school, secrecy was no longer warranted. If the old man wants to fight a war, they would give him a war he will never forget... And with this last thought Alex finally drifted to sleep himself, one arm draped over Lilith's waist, pulling her close.

As all others slowly went to bed to find rest after the troubling events of the day Albus Dumbledore still paced around in his office. Not because he really feared consequences for his actions this day, oh no there were others that would lose their posts long before he would even be considered as responsible person for this tragedy. No it was the small revelation he got after the dragon had been slain. That those Covenant children were able to take down a fully grown and enraged dragon was disconcerting. Even with the injuries they had to suffer from the fight they still managed to do something not many wizards would even try these days.

Unfortunately he couldn't force Alexander to reveal his real strength, but he now got a general idea what he had to expect from the Grindelwald heir. And then there was that small incomplete medical report... he wished that his school nurse had been able to complete the scan of Alexanders current health. But the little information he got on him were eye opening. That curious scar on the boys head that ran from his hairline down to his eyebrow, that was not one but two separate scars. One dating back to the year 1981 the other to 1985. Slowly the dots in his mind connected. Combined with some of his other information this all painted a most disconcerting picture. He cursed loudly as he realized that Gellert Grindelwald was still his most dangerous enemy even after all those years of incarceration.

He was suddenly startled from his thoughts when someone knocked on the door to his office. He did not expect any visitors at this late hour, he frowned at this unwanted interruption but admitted his late visitor none the less. As the door opened a somber looking James Potter entered the room. Albus quickly schooled his face to his usual grandfatherly mask before he spoke to the man.

"Ah James my boy. You look weary, is everything alright with your daughter? Last I checked the healers said she would make a full recovery, I hope nothing has changed."

James breathed deeply to keep himself calm before he spoke to his former mentor. "Rose will be alright, not that you have done anything to ensure that though." His tone was filled with barely contained anger. "She will be able to leave the hospital wing in less than a month if she heals well enough. Just what were you thinking sending my fourteen year old daughter against one of the most dangerous and vicious creatures known to mankind? Have you lost your mind due to your old age?"

Hearing the angry rant caused Albus to simply shake his head with a sad, disappointed expression on his face. "James we had taken all necessary precautions. The dragon tamers from the preserve were ready at all times to interfere if things had gone awry."

"Then why is my daughter lying in the Hospital Wing with heavy burns at one of her legs and her upper body? Where were those blasted idiots?" James yelled at the old wizard, shocking him with the outburst. Never before had James Potter even dared to think about raising his voice in this way against his former mentor.

"James, please calm yourself." Dumbledore admonished the enraged man with a stern voice. "We had everything under control until the moment the Grindelwald heir and his followers interfered. They needlessly enraged the dragon; making any intervention of the dragon tamers impossible."

"Don't you dare trying to pin the responsibility on someone else. Those students saved my daughter's life while you and your staff all sat outside on your geriatric asses and watched the show."

"James they wanted to slay the dragon, ever since they have come to this school there has been one incident after another causing problems in an attempt to gain followers among my students. I have the firm belief that they enraged the dragon on purpose to gain the fame for slaying it. Don't let the young Grindelwald fool you with his attitude. He and his family are dangerous manipulators and he has already started to corrupt my students. Open your eyes to the truth, James."

James was a bit taken aback by the old wizards claim, he had to admit that there was a certain truth to his words. The Covenant has only caused problems so fast and the rumors of Hogwarts students joining this more than questionable group had already been proven. Most of his resolve was long gone by now, only doubt remained. Was Albus right? Was this all a trick? All those wounded for fame?

"James... The Grindelwalds are dangerous, even the charismatic Alexander Grindelwald is nearly as unethical as his grandfather. I tried and I still try to bring him back to the Light, but at the moment the boy is dangerous beyond any doubt. His beliefs must not be spread around. I concede I made a mistake when I allowed Rose to train with the Covenant, I hoped that innocent Rose would have a positive influence on Alexander, but alas I fear it was the different way around and they have partly succeeded in corrupting her."

"What do you mean, they have succeeded?" James looked shocked at the old headmaster, confused about this statement. He had talked almost daily with his daughter and he had never seen a change in her demeanor.

"Have you not seen that bracelet on her wrist? I saw it clear as day when I visited the Hospital Wing earlier today. Only Covenant members have such bracelets with the blood red jewel on top of it. I fear young Rose might have joined the Covenant, whether she was forced or joined at her own volition I cannot say..." Albus sighed for good measure, but this time his concerned frown was real. He had not intended for Rose to become one of them, so far she had been rather antisocial in her years at school, he had not expected her to find acceptance among the Durmstrang students.

"No... not my own daughter. Why would she be part of a group that openly fights against the rights for muggleborn. Rose loves her mother more than anything, she would never go against her..." James looked somewhat despaired at Dumbledore. He had come to this office, angry about what had happened to his daughter, willing to vent his anger against the man he saw as the one responsible for her wounds. And now... now everything had taken a turn for the worse...

For a moment Dumbledore hesitated whether he should share his latest discovery and his startling conclusion with the man. James Potter was an important ally, he was the second in command of the

Department of Magical Law Enforcement, keeping him on his side was most important for the cause of the Light side. So even though the man's loyalty had faltered a bit this day he would share this information with him and thereby secure James Potter's support for the Greater Good of the Light.

As Alex woke up the next morning he found Lilith still lying next to him. When he went to sleep she had her back turned to him, but sometime during the night she had turned around so he was now staring into those entrancing emerald eyes of his wide awake fiancée.

"Morning, Lilith." His soft greeting elicited a small smile from her. "I hope you slept as well as I have."

She shook her head slightly, her smile faltering. "Was it... was it just a bad dream? The fight, all the wounded... the dragon?"

"I am afraid not, Lilith. But we are still here. The wounded will recover and we will have justice. The old man will pay for what he has done, that I swear." A small tear escaped her eyes as she heard his vow. "Hush, Lilith. There is no need to cry."

"I don't want revenge... I want to leave this dreaded place. I want to know that you are safe... I just want peace..." Lilith's admission shocked him a bit, he knew that everything would be much more strained now, that further fights were bound to come. But he had not expected her to be so emotionally effected by it.

"Lilith... I wish the same, to live a peaceful life, but we all know that we will never have that future as long as narrow minded people like Dumbledore are in positions of power. Believe me there is nothing that I want more then to live a simple life with my family, with you. But right now that is not possible. We have to live through these hardships and earn the future we desire."

Lilith scooted even closer to him, clinging onto him tightly. "I don't want to loose you, not now when I can finally admit what you mean to me. I love you Alex, I love you and I am scared to loose you because of that old maniac."

Her admission came as a shock for Alex. Not her feelings but the fact that she was the first to openly admit her feelings. For him being

with her had long passed beyond the stage of duty. She was no longer just the girl his parents had chosen for him to form a permanent political alliance. The duty had long turned into something more. For her it took seeing him in mortal peril in a fight against a dragon to find the courage to admit her feelings openly. For him... for him it only took hearing her words to admit it. To himself and to her.

"Lilith... you won't loose me any time soon. You will be stuck with me for many more years, because I love you too and I cannot await the day we will marry." He kissed her softly before he rested his forehead against hers. "No one will destroy our future together."

They stayed like this for some more time, holding on to each other, content with each others presence and the knowledge that their feelings were mutual. But in the end they had to get up, a long day was ahead of them and they would be needed, now more then ever with Dumbledore on the loose.

Most Covenant members were already assembled in the ships mess hall, eating their breakfast and chatting animatedly. The main topic for all of them was evidently Albus Dumbledore and how they would get justice against the old man. Many of the Hogwarts Covenant members were also present, for them attending their own school seemed to be a bad idea as all those who had been exposed in the last days had become the favorite targets of a certain group of Gryffindor misfits. And apparently the staff was less inclined to punish those students, Dumbledore's influence on his teachers ever evident in their actions now.

All chatter immediately came to a hold when Alex and Lilith entered the mess hall hand in hand before they sat down at their usual table, surrounded by their friends and most trusted. The room remained silent for a few more moments before the all present students resumed their former conversations. At Alex table Elena looked at her brother and his fiancée with a calculating gaze, before she smirked.

"About time the two of you take the next step in your relationship." Victor snorted next to Elena in obvious amusement, though Alex and Lilith tried to show no reaction to the Veela's words. "Oh and Lilith... we have to talk later."

"Good to see you have stopped chewing our heads of." Alex smiled at his sister, causing her to shrug in response.

"Currently I have more important things to worry about then the bitch and her mother. My friends and comrades are top priority, can't let you all down now. The mood is bad enough without me going on a rampage."

"Good to hear. Any news I should know about before we start making the old mans life miserable?" Some chuckled at his words, they all knew that no matter how funny this statement sounded, Alex was completely serious. He would make Dumbledore's life hell after what he had pulled the day before.

Elena quickly pushed a copy of the newest issue of the Daily Prophet, that one of the Hogwarts students had brought along, towards Alex. "Yeah, you made front page on Britain's favorite magical tabloid rag."

Alex looked rather unsurprised when he saw the article.

Tragedy at Triwizard Tournament

by Rita Skeeter

Alex smirked as he read the article, the reporter clearly was no fan of Dumbledore. The article detailed the bloody fight the day before, emphasizing how the Covenant members 'courageously stepped in to save a Hogwarts student while Dumbledore and his staff showed no interest to help at all.

The article clearly vilified the officials of the Tournament and mentioned the first reactions of Minister Fudge to what had happened. Bartemius Crouch Sr had been fired because of the tragedy and Ludo Bagman was under investigation for neglecting his duties. To Alex this meant nothing, both men had absolutely no meaning to him and his plans, he would have much rather seen Fudge taking actions against Dumbledore.

And the reporter clearly shared Alex mindset as she detailed Dumbledore's meddling in the fight and how it caused most of the problems for the Durmstrang students. She even went as far as claiming that Dumbledore might have done it all on purpose in an

attempt to get rid of the heir of his former opponent. Oh Alex loved that part the most. Especially the ending paragraph of the article.

This reporter seriously questions how a man like Albus Dumbledore can remain in his position without even as much as an investigation. Undoubtedly Dumbledore has proven to be unfit for his duties when he allowed dangerous creatures to be brought to his school. How can parents expect their children to be safe with such a clearly neglectful man in charge of their safety? Maybe it is time to change how things are handled at Hogwarts, for the safety and the future of wizarding Britain's children.

Alex grinned as he finished the article. This would definitely help them in the long run, apparently that Skeeter woman had a very low opinion of Dumbledore. She made them the courageous heroes and him the evil old wizard who tried to harm them.

"That woman has a thing for trying to ruin heroes, my father once said this woman only cares for the next big story, no matter how much she has to embellish it. And digging up dirt on our societies so called role models always guarantees huge success." While Alex had been reading, Cassiopeia Black had joined him and his friends at their table. Her comment on Skeeter seemed to make sense and as long as that woman was fixed on ruining Dumbledore; Alex couldn't care less about her articles on the Covenant at the moment.

"Good morning, Ms Black. I hope your fellow students did not bother you on your way here?" Alex looked curiously at the younger girl. She was a member of an old and influential British family, she could always be a good source for information on the inner workings of magical Britain and its higher ups.

"As unbelievable as it sounds my brother and his group of wackos were busy since our confrontation in the Great Hall. Apparently he has started his own little hunt for school traitors as he calls us Covenant members. He stubbornly believes he can find all Covenant members to purge his school of dark influences. As if he and his group of trained monkeys will ever manage that." Several people at the table chuckled at her words, Alex though had a pensive look on his face.

"Still be cautious. Even the dumbest man can get a lucky shot in a battle. And Dumbledore and his lapdogs apparently support their

behavior. Don't take unnecessary risks, I won't have any of my Covenant members fall victim to the old mans manipulations."

"Of course, Lord Grindelwald. But I also want to warn you, my bigoted brother has written a letter to our father and he will show up sometime today to talk to you about me. I don't know what Antares wrote but my fathers last letter to me was less then friendly."

"Don't worry, I will talk to him. He will accept your decision to join us before the day is over." Alex contemplated this information. He would need to gain the trust of Lord Black, he could be a valuable friend and ally to them.

"Yes... I will talk to him as well... today I will address my wish to switch schools at the end of this year."

Lilith looked approvingly at Cassiopeia, in her opinion Hogwarts was the worst school she had ever seen and anyone who wishes to attend a real school should be encouraged as much as possible. "Durmstrang will do you good, but we will need to teach you at least Russian, better yet Russian and German so you won't have problems with our teachers. If you want I can help you with that." Lilith smiled encouragingly at the younger girl who sported a thankful expression.

"Help would be very much appreciated. Learning both languages in less then a year will be hard. I will also need to revise some of the subjects that are not even in the Hogwarts curriculum... so much to do and so little time." Cassiopeia sighed dramatically. At least she wasn't one to give up in the face of a challenge.

"Lucky for you we have the teachers for those subjects with us, so I guess you will simply spent nearly all of your free time on our ship from now on." Lilith said with a slight grin.

"Everything is better then being forced to deal with those idiots in the school all day."

Alex had silently listened to their conversation as he ate his breakfast before he decided to bring in his own opinion on the matter. "Maybe we should offer remedial classes to all new members that have the intention to join our school. If things are really as fucked up as you describe them I have no doubt that you

won't be the only new student to switch schools." Some mumbled their consent to such a decision, even though they knew that they hardly had the time to offer help due to the strained situation here they would still need to support their new recruits in any way possible.

As Alex had finished his breakfast he stood up from his place, looking around the room. Immediately the room quieted down, all present students watching their leader attentively. "My friends I know yesterday was a hard day for all of us. That day has proven that we are indeed not safe here, that our enemy has no qualms to use any given situation to weaken our position. Sometime today Benedikt will return with our reinforcements and news on our wounded friends. Until we are back to our full numbers I ask all of you to not leave the ship unnecessarily or at least in your full groups. Our enemies are on the move and we cannot allow them to weaken us further."

It was easy to see that all of them were less than pleased with the situation, most of them would much rather leave the ship and give Dumbledore and his followers hell. But alas none of them would act against Alexander's orders, they knew he most likely had already formulated a new plan to bring the old man to justice.

"As we can clearly see the teachers of Hogwarts are firmly on Dumbledore's side, as a reaction to that we will no longer attend lessons at that school for the moment. Until we can remedy the unfortunate situation at this school the teachers we have with us shall teach us in all subjects we need at the moment. I have already sent a note informing the teachers of this change so they can prepare for coming Monday. Until then rest up and be vigilant whenever you decide to leave the ship." The mood in the room was somber after Alex's announcement.

"And what are we gonna do, Alex?" Lilith looked at her fiancée with an arched eyebrow.

"Not much for now. I want to go visit Rose in the hospital wing. She is one of us and we won't ignore her."

"Fine with me, I hope she is better. She looked awful after her encounter with the dragon."

"We'll see. Come we should go now." Alex held his hand out to her to help her stand up. "I need three more to come along. We will go up to the castle so I need people who are willing to fight if necessary." With the recent losses during the fight all the former teams had been broken up, new teams would have to be formed as soon as Benedikt had returned.

There was no need to wait for long, more than just three jumped at the chance to leave the ship and the possibility to fight. In the end Alex relented and let eight other students come along, two full teams was a bit overkill for a simple visit to the hospital wing, but it would definitely bring a message across for all who would see them.

As Alex and his comrades slowly walked through the hallways of the British school they were the center of all attention. None of the Hogwarts students dared to stand in their way, most even jumped out of the way, looking at the Grindelwald heir and his fellow Covenant members with a mixture of awe and fear. Killing a dragon sure had left an interesting effect on the more easily influence-able students at Hogwarts. Though it was blatantly obvious that all students with red ties glared at them as if they were the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters. Also there were a lot of people watching them that were definitely neither Aurors nor students nor teachers at this school. They were really kind of suspicious and Alex couldn't shake the feeling that those people were Dumbledore's feeble attempt to watch the Covenant's every move in this school.

Meanwhile Victor sat in a darkened corner of the ships mess hall, glaring at the golden egg he had retrieved from the dragon the day before. He was in no mood to think about the Tournament, but he also knew that it was important to solve this clue as soon as possible to prepare for the second Task next February.

Elena watched the stoic Bulgarian somewhat amused before she approached him. "You know the egg won't spit out the solution just because you glare holes in it."

"Who knows, the Brits are crazy enough that it could work." He looked up at the curious Veela with an arched eyebrow. "I would have expected you to go with your brother to the castle."

Elena made a dismissive motion with her hand at his words. "Nah, I don't want to kill today... and seeing Alex and Lilith giving each other

those looks is kind of sickening..." Victor snorted loudly when he heard her words. "Don't get me wrong I am happy that those two stubborn people have finally admitted their feelings, but still..."

"Scared that Lilith might steal your brother from you?" His words caused Elena to glare at him, making him laugh out loudly. "Apparently I have hit the mark."

"Ah shut up, Victor. Get back to your egg. You know there is a button, why don't you push it and see what will happen."

Victor complied without arguing and pushed the small button, causing the egg to open and emit a loud, screeching sound, loud enough so that everyone in the room had to cover their ears before it hurt them too much. Victor quickly closed the egg again.

"If you open that thing in my presence ever again I will sink it to the bottom of this lake." Victor chuckled as he heard that. "And you along with it." Elena hissed at him, eliciting another dark chuckle from the young Bulgarian.

"I know more then one young lady that would not take too kindly to you causing my early demise. And just think what Alex would say..."

"He would agree with me once he hears my reasoning." She looked smugly at him, but he was completely unfazed by this.

"We will see, Elena, we will see. As long as you won't do anything that seriously harms my families negotiations for a marriage contract for me..."

"I already pity the girl that has to marry you one day, Victor. Makes me glad that Alex and ...our parents have ensured me that I will never be subjected to something like a contract. Having Alex in a political marriage is sufficient."

"You wouldn't be my type anyway." Victor muttered.

"Too intelligent?"

"No... too feisty." He said before he stood up and left the room, leaving Elena and the egg at the table in the corner of the mess hall.

Alex was glad when they had finally arrived at the hospital wing and found it mostly abandoned. The only people in sight were the school nurse who seemed to reorganize one of her potion cabinets, Rose who was seemingly asleep in one of the beds and a woman with equally red hair as the young Gryffindor who sat in the chair next to the bed Rose occupied at the moment. Alex vaguely remembered the woman from the first time he met James Potter years ago in London. The woman had to be his wife Lily Potter, the muggleborn who had troubled Rose's mind so much as she contemplated her own initiation into the Covenant.

Only Alex and Lilith approached the bed, the latter keeping an eye on the school nurse. Lilith would not allow that woman to point a wand at Alex ever again, no matter for what reason she did it. Lily Potter had long seen the approaching teens and watched them equally wary as Lilith watched the nurse. Lily knew what those people represented and that she was most likely not on their list for friendly conversations because of her blood status.

"How is she doing?" Alex asked without any greeting or other terms of courtesy. Both sides knew exactly who the other were, no need for useless chatter. And he had seen the weary look she had when she saw him approaching. It was more than obvious to him that Lily Potter believed in the rumors instead of trying to learn the truth, so he had no intention to waste his time on a lost cause.

Lily considered her response for a moment. To her the Grindelwald heir was kind of rude, but she also knew that without him and his fellow students Rose might as well be dead by now. She relented to share these information with him for now, there was no harm to Rose if he knew it. "She is well off for the wounds she had received. Still she will be kept asleep for another few days and even once she wakes up she will have to stay some more weeks until she can be fully discharged. The wounds weren't life threatening, but grave none the less."

"As long as she recovers all is fine." He went to leave, knowing that there was nothing more he could do here to help young Rose. But a question from Lily Potter got his attention.

"Why? Why did you risk so much to save my daughter?"

"Because the Covenant looks out for its own." His answer was shocking for Lily, she knew her daughter was allowed to train with those dubious people, but for her sweet gentle Rose to join a group like the Covenant? It sounded like complete heresy, something that would never happen.

"So the headmaster was correct." James Potter's voice boomed from the entrance of the hospital wing as he marched closer with an angry and equally determined look on his face. "You really corrupted my daughter with your shady morals and firebrand speeches."

"I see you talked to the old codger. Pray tell me what half truth did he tell you to get you back to his side?" Alex regarded the man coldly. He had a certain respect for James Potter, but should the man stand on Dumbledore's side he was nothing more than an enemy.

"He told me everything, Mr Grindelwald. Without you and your ill begotten family none of this would have happened." Alex arched an eyebrow in question at this statement.

"So Dumbledore blames me for all of this? It wasn't me who chose to bring dragons to this school, neither was it me who chose Rose as a champion, nor was it me who forced her to face the Horntail. So tell me Mr Potter, what exactly was my fault in all of this?" Alex regarded the man coldly with narrowed eyes.

"You know exactly what you did just to increase your fame and to gain more followers for the Covenant. I will say this just once. Stay away from my daughter from now on." James glared at the young Grindelwald. To him it was obvious that Albus was at least wrong with his last suspicion. Seeing the Grindelwalds reaction made it clear that there was nothing good in that boy.

"Neither can you take a person out of the Covenant nor can you take the Covenant out of person. Rose made her own decision and it is not in your power to change that." Lily Potter gasped at Alexander's words, still in denial about her daughter's affiliation with the Covenant.

"GET OUT." James Potter roared at the young Grindelwald. Moments later he was chastised by the school nurse, but James ignored it to continue glaring at Alex.

"A pity that you have decided to return to your role as Dumbledore's lapdog. I had expected better of you Mr Potter. But alas I have met only few Gryffindors, former or present, that are actually worth saving. Blind sheep like you are the reason our world gets destroyed by men like Dumbledore and Voldemort. Open your eyes and use your brain for once, else you will soon find out that the path you have chosen will only lead to your own demise." Without further waiting for a response Alex and Lilith left the hospital wing. James was seething, the way the boy talked to him... the nerve of such a young man... Lily Potter sat silently next to her unconscious daughter, deeply worried about the latest revelation. Her own daughter had joined a group like the Covenant, a group that openly acts against muggleborns. What would that mean about her daughter's feelings towards her own mother? Silently Lily prayed, she prayed that this all was just a misunderstanding and Rose had not become one of those villains.

Benedikt sat quietly through lunch, listening to his sister as she once more spoke to the rest of the school and the staff before they started eating. To him it felt good to be back at Durmstrang where the Covenant was undisputed and the students were safe. But in his subconscious guilt was nagging him to return to Hogwarts immediately, his friends needed him. He had just received all the information Alex had asked for, as well as some other reports on how things had fared at Durmstrang in the absence of most of the Covenant's leading group. Benedikt marveled the change in his sister's attitude, when he and Alex were here she was mostly one of the more silent people, thinking things through, but now she was acting almost impulsive to make the needed decisions for the better of the school. Alex wouldn't believe this when he told him.

Lunch itself was as quiet affair for the students after Ivanna's last announcements. The twelve students that would replace the wounded were somewhat giddy, their friends around them talked animatedly, knowing that they would not see each other for many months to come. The five students that would return with Benedikt after their treatment looked rather pensive. They knew what kind of situation they would return to, they knew that fighting was inevitable, but Benedikt could not judge whether those students were looking forward to the conflict or had second thoughts about going back to Hogwarts.

Soon lunch time was over and most students returned to their studies, only a handful remaining to say goodbye to the departing group.

"Be careful, Benedikt. Should you return as one of the the wounded I will ensure that you won't leave the hospital for a long time, got that?" Ivanna looked sternly at her brother, but soon worry was all too visible in her eyes.

"Don't worry. We will be much more careful from now on. Now we know how far the old goat is willing to go and I guarantee you that he will pay."

"Just don't get yourself killed, brother." Ivanna sighed, she really did not want her brother to go back just to fight.

"Will you be alright here?"

"Yeah. In about an hour the parents of the wounded students will come to visit. They will demand answers... oh well I will live through it. I already finished the press statement and sent it to our usual contacts yesterday evening after you retired, so that is done as well. Running the school is easy enough with the help of my friends here." Ivanna looked over to where Rebecca and Arvid were standing and talking to some of the students that were about to leave. She knew very well that without those two her job here would be extremely hard.

"Fine, fine. Do me a favor, tell mother I am sorry that I can't return for Christmas and that I love her and all that stuff... you know what I mean."

"Yeah. Christmas will be somewhat lonely without you, just mother and me at home." Both Kasakow twins were silent for a few moments before Ivanna gave her brother a tight hug. "Take care and don't forget to let me know when you need help with those Brits. There are still many overeager students here that would love to help." She smiled sadly as she let go of Benedikt.

"Will do, Ivanna. Enjoy your power over the school." Benedikt smirked a bit as he stepped away towards his traveling companions. All of them grabbed a long rope that was charmed to work as portkey, placing them just outside of the Hogwarts wards at the

shore of the lake. With one last wave to his sister Benedikt was gone, back to Hogwarts to help their friends.

A solitary tear slid down Ivanna's cheek, she never liked good byes, especially saying good bye to her brother.

"Everything alright Ivanna?" Rebecca and Arvid had come over, looking at their leader with worry.

"Yeah Rebecca. Just sad that Benedikt had to leave so soon." She sniffed once before she regained her composure and schooled her facial expression back to the indifferent mask she always wore. "Come on, we have to prepare for the parents and I still have to talk to Astris about what she has seen." Slowly they walked back towards Ivanna's office, to them their normal every day duties would resume, while their friends and comrades at Hogwarts expected a fight any day, never knowing what the next day would bring.

As Alex and his group returned to the ship he could see the arrival of Benedikt and their reinforcements. Many Covenant students watched their arrival from the deck of the ship with happy faces. Now with them being back to full strength they could be a bit more at ease, though they would have to remain ever vigilant at this school.

"Benedikt. I am so glad to see you. Had a nice stay at Durmstrang?" Alex greeted his friend with an exuberant hug, making many look at him oddly because of this unusual display.

"Yeah, I see you missed me." Benedikt smirked smugly at his friend.

"You can't even begin to imagine how glad I am that we are back to full power now. This place is getting worse by the hour." Alex looked back at the castle with a dark look. "Anyways how was it back home? The school still standing?"

"Yeah. You won't believe it but Ivanna is really good at keeping the school running in our absence. She really..." Before Benedikt could continue they were interrupted by Elena's arrival.

"Sorry to interrupt your brotherly bonding here, but Alex you have a guest waiting for you in the meeting room on deck two." Alex groaned, he really wasn't in the mood right now. "You shouldn't keep Lord Black waiting Alex." Reluctantly Alex nodded and walked off.

"Oh and Alex there was also a letter that has arrived for you while you were in the castle. Minister Fudge wants something as it seems." Elena smirked at the last information, making Alex shake his head in frustration.

As Alex reached the meeting room he saw a black haired man in dark, expensive looking robes sitting at the table with Cassiopeia, both talking quietly. Alex was relieved that both occupants of the room seemed to be calm, the last thing he needed was another father accusing him loudly of corrupting his poor innocent daughter.

Cassiopeia was the first to see Alex enter the room and stood up to curtsy much to Alex amusement. She had not done so ever before, why she did it now in the presence of her father was beyond his understanding. Seeing his daughter's action Sirius Black also stood up and turned towards the young Grindelwald.

"Lord Black, it is a pleasure to meet you in person. I am Alexander Grindelwald, heir to the Grindelwald family, student leader at Durmstrang and leader of the Crimson Covenant." Alex shook the man's hand, Sirius gripping the younger man's hand firmly, looking him directly in the eye as if he tried to intimidate him with just a look. "Let us sit down and talk about what brings you here this day."

"I think the question why I am here is not necessary." He looked pointedly at his daughter who sat only one seat away from Alex, both arms on the table, showing the bracelet on her arm to everyone in the room.

"Indeed. You are worried about your daughter and her recent joining of the Covenant."

"Damn right you are. The things my son wrote about your group portrayed you in a less than favorable light."

"Tell me Mr Black, what do you know about the Crimson Covenant and the Unity Thesis?" Alex asked calmly, before he called a house elf and asked for tea for the group.

"Only the things that are considered general knowledge. And the few things my daughter tried to explain until you arrived. Still I must ask, why did you recruit my daughter? Is it because she is a Black?"

Sirius asked in a challenging tone, obviously hard pressed to remain calm and not speak his mind as he normally would.

"Your daughter's family has nothing to do with all of this. We stand for the Unity of all magical races, we couldn't care less for family names or the financial status of our members families."

Sirius snorted when he heard this. "Unity... yeah right. Unity for all but muggleborn."

"Muggleborn are a problem as they are treated at the moment. Instead of forcing them to integrate to our society people like Albus Dumbledore spit on our traditions and culture to coddle those foreign intruders." Alex still tried to remain calm, though he too was hard pressed by now since he had no interest in letting another father yell at him today because the man was too blind to see the truth.

Much to Alex surprise Sirius did not respond immediately, but rather looked contemplative. Cassiopeia had fixed her father with a stern glare, making the man look rather unwell whenever his eyes met those of his daughter.

"Please understand that the way things are at the moment Dumbledore will just create another war in his attempt to enforce what he believes to be right. To him part of the Light is coddling the poor muggleborn since the bad dark lords openly oppose those people. But have you ever asked yourself why most pure bloods and supposed dark lords are so hostile towards this minority group?" Alex paused for a moment to let man think about his words. "Ever since we started letting muggleborn join our society they have dismissed our culture and traditions as weird, barbaric and evil. It is understandable that people do not take too kindly to foreigners that know nothing about their lives trying to destroy their very way of life just because those foreigners don't like it."

Sirius sighed deeply. He could understand this reasoning, but that did not mean he had to like it. "And just because those people are negative towards our culture you want to kill them just like other dark lords did before you?"

Alex actually laughed at these words, earning him a glare from the Lord Black. "No, never have I or any other Covenant member stated that we wish to kill muggleborn. Neither am I a dark lord. That is all

conjecture that Dumbledore uses to justify his opposition to my group."

"But my son said..."

"Lord Black, which house is your son in?"

"Gryffindor, what else..."

"Exactly. Those Gryffindors like to claim they are the true light wizards, good to a fault. But in fact they are sheep. They follow the old man's words without thinking. And especially the Gryffindor group your son is part of is nothing more than a group of trained monkeys that play bully. Did you know that your son's group has made it their personal mission to bully Rose Potter all year because one of them, one Ronald Weasley, hates her? Has your son told you that he currently bullies his way through his school in his self proclaimed duty to 'purge' the school of all dark influences. Dark in this context is of course determined by him and his group."

Sirius stared wide eyed as he heard that. He looked at Cassiopeia for confirmation, receiving a nod from her in return. "It is true father. He even goes as far as to come to me during breakfast in the great hall, calling me names, calling my friends criminals that he wants to see in Azkaban and finally threatening me with his wand when he did not get the rise out of me that he wanted. Or did he tell you that Dumbledore reprimanded me for taking my own wand to protect myself from those zealously stupid Gryffindors. The old man took almost two hundred house points for that and for saying that Antares was the first to pull out his wand." Again Sirius was gaping like a fish. "I quite frankly don't feel safe in a school where the headmaster allows a single group of students to bully others because they don't believe in his dogmas. That is the reason why I want to switch schools at the end of this year. I am sure that Durmstrang will be much better for my studies where I can be myself without having to fear to be 'purged' by brain dead light wizards for my beliefs."

Sirius was silent for some minutes. None of them spoke a word as Alex quietly sipped the tea the house elf had brought them. Many different emotions could be seen on the face of the Lord Black as he contemplated the entire situation and what he just heard. When he finally spoke it seemed like an eternity had passed.

"Fine... I will accept this for now. I will accept your membership in the Covenant, please don't make me ever regret this Cassiopeia. But don't ask me to side with your group anytime soon, I would rather remain neutral for now." His voice was filled with emotion, his daughter rushing around the table to hug him tightly. "About your wish to switch schools we will have to talk later. I want to consult your mother about this first, that is an really big decision I won't make alone." He stood up after his daughter had stepped back from the hug and shook Alex hand once more before he would leave. "As for you, Lord Grindelwald. Keep my daughter safe or else you will learn why it is unwise to anger the Lord of the Black family." His voice was dark, bare of any amusement.

"Don't worry, Lord Black. The Covenant looks out for its own. Every member will watch over her just like she will watch over the other members." Alex voice was respectful, the willingness of Sirius Black to actually sit down and listen to the his words gained the man a lot of respect from the Grindelwald heir. It is not like Sirius would suddenly openly support the Covenant, but it was an important step to know that the Head of the Black family was open for talks and not condemning them without knowing anything.

"Fine." Sirius almost barked at Alex before he turned towards his daughter one more time. "And now I will have a long chat with your brother. If only half of this is the truth I will have to seriously talk some sense into him for shaming the Black family and the Gryffindor house." With these parting words Sirius disappeared through the door and was lead off the ship by the same Auror that had lead him to the meeting room.

AN: Oh well so much for this chapter. I know this is mostly the reactions to what happened in the previous chapter, but I really felt like I needed to dedicate a whole chapter to this situation. I know there are still some loose threads, but hey I need something for the next chapters so don't worry, all storylines will come to a satisfying closure.

As I reread the last few chapters I also realized that I have somewhat neglected Victor. He is the champion and I had only the bare minimum of appearances for him so far. I have started this chapter with his conversation with Elena and will continue to involve him more in the future. Also I have not decided if I pair him up with Elena or someone else, I must admit they seem less compatible

then I would want them to, especially if you consider that even despite Victor's involvement in the Covenant he and Alex still have this small rivalry from their past. Pairing him with a girl that would choose Alex without hesitation if she would have to... well it would be kind of weird for him. But I will see as the story progresses what I do with them.

Ah yes and the short romantic scene between Alex and Lilith. I know this is one of the most hated pairings according to some of my oh so wonderful flammers, but hey they are together and I won't change that. It is really obvious that there are a lot of people who dislike Lilith, extremely evident when I look at the Hits for the chapters. The average Hits for the chapters after chapter 13, the chapter where the pairing was announced, is one thousand lower than before. Kind of sad but I won't force anyone to like the story. There will be more scenes showing Alex and Lilith as a couple from here on so as a warning for all who don't like it, be prepared...

There have been certain revelations in this chapter, Dumbles has his suspicions. How he figures out the rest will be part of the next chapter.

Ah and for the people who asked me about my apparent dislike for the Gryffindor house... Well I admit I don't like them. In cannon I always had the feeling that the little Lions are even more bigoted than the oh so bad Slytherins. No wonder the Snakes all go dark when from the moment that hat yells out their house they are treated like criminals and monster by the Gryffindors and sometime the Puffs since they seem to be nothing more the blind followers of the light Gryffindors. Gryffs shun, slander and in case of the twins ridicule Slytherins from the first day the children enter school. All that because of the bad name of the Slytherin house and the actions of Snape. Makes the Slytherins actions seem more like retribution than anything else... really that is how I saw it in the cannon books. In my opinion the Gryffindors have possibly pushed more children towards the dark lord than the Death Eaters ever could.

I blabber to much again... please leave a Review with your opinions on the chapter and remember flammers will be ignored.

Chapter 22: Assertion

It was the first day of December as Rose finally awoke, not because her wounds had forced her to, but because the school nurse kept her asleep to aid her healing and minimize her movement so her burn wounds could heal properly. For the entire week she had spent in the Hospital Wing Lily Potter had remained with her daughter, watching her vigilantly. Neither Alex nor any other Covenant members had attempted to visit the young girl during the week, James Potter himself had posted one of his Aurors at the entrance to the Hospital Wing, to guard his daughter from the 'dangerous foreigners'.

As Rose awoke the world was blurry at first, a small groan escaped her lips, startling her mother who dozed next to her in a chair. "Rosie, oh my baby are you alright? Does it hurt anywhere? Wait let me get Madam Pomfrey."

"Mum." Rose exclamation got her mother to stop in her track and look at her daughter. "What happened?"

"Oh Rosie, you got hurt in this terrible tournament... that dragon nearly killed you..." Lily nearly sobbed when she recalled her fear for her daughter and seeing her so badly wounded in her bed here in the hospital wing.

By now the school nurse had come and started casting diagnostic charms, but she remained silent, not willing to interrupt the mother-daughter talk.

"Mum... where are the others? I remember them jumping down into the ring to save me... Silvia dragging me away from the battlefield... after that all is black..." Lily Potter frowned when her daughter asked for the Durmstrang students. After James had told her what Dumbledore had explained to him she saw the Covenant in a different light. At first she was thankful for their intervention, but now...

"Don't worry about those people. They can protect themselves." Lily tried to keep the bitterness and coldness out of her voice, but did not really succeed.

"But mom, some of them are my friends, they came to help me. They are..."

"They are the reason you are here in hospital. They enraged the dragon, making it impossible for the dragon tamers to interfere and help you. They only cared for the fame they would get for killing a dragon."

"You are wrong." Rose answered almost hysterically. "That monster was enraged from the moment the tamers chained it to the ground in the ring. It would have killed me without them. They are my comrades, they stood up for me." Rose defended her fellow Covenant members, even against her own mother. She had hoped she could explain everything to her mother in a long and peaceful talk, but apparently the headmaster had already turned Lily against the Covenant... the thought to be forced to choose between the Covenant and her mother was unbearable for the young girl.

"Rose... don't let them corrupt you. They don't care for you... not like your family and friends here at Hogwarts." Lily almost pleaded with her daughter, her eyes fixed on the small bracelet on her daughter's wrist. Several times had she tried to remove that offending thing, but no matter what she tried it wouldn't come off.

"You don't know anything. The other students here hate me. They loathe my existence. To them it should have been me who died, not my brother... their god damn savior." Rose spoke bitterly about her fellow students here, for the first time she openly talked about what her school life was like in front of her mother. "I have no friends, I have no one here. The Durmstrang students are the first people in years that are nice to me and help me. People who see me for who I am and protect me."

Lily was shocked at first, she did not know anything about how her daughter fared at Hogwarts. She always assumed that her daughter was well liked, who wouldn't like a sweet girl such as her daughter. But this... James had not told her anything and he had already been here for two months. Surely he would have seen it and acted against it. Surely Headmaster Dumbledore would not let such bad things happen to her child...

"Rosie... you can't be serious about those Durmstrang students. They are dark people, they fight against all our family stands for..."

"So we stand for the destruction of the magical culture, the bias and prejudice against the non human races, against the Unity of our world?" Rose snapped at her mother, she did not know why she reacted like this towards her mother. Never before had she talked back to her, she wouldn't have dared to think about using this tone with her. But Alex and the Covenant had shown her a dream, they have shared that dream with her and they have given her something to believe in.

"Rose..." Her mother paled in shock as she heard her daughter talk. Her voice was barely a whisper now. "Is this really what you believe in? Are you really choosing them over your family? Over me?" Lily did not wait for an answer, instead she stood up and left the room with tears in her eyes.

Rose felt terrible when she saw her mother leave. But she did not regret her words in the slightest. She remembered what Alex had told her, her family would not be with her forever, the time would come to make her own decision and live with the consequences. This was just the first major decision she has made, she belonged to the Covenant and no words from her mother could change that.

Madam Pomfrey had watched the entire exchange with a frown, she did not like it when people argued in her hospital, such things only cause distress for the sick and wounded. Sure she did not like the Covenant all that much after being called a quack and being threatened when she only did her job. But she could understand their distrust more than the headmaster's obsession with their leader.

Alex and his friends sat in the mess hall of their ship, enjoying a peaceful lunch when one of the Russian Aurors came in with a letter in his hand. Alex already expected another missive from Minister Fudge, the man had been very inquisitive about their situation at Hogwarts and offered his help should there be anything they would need. But to his surprise the Auror handed the letter to Cassiopeia before he quickly left the room.

The young Black opened it and quickly scanned the letter before she started laughing. Everyone at the table looked at her oddly, causing her to crack another smile and share the news that caused her such amusement. "The letter is from my father. My transfer at the end of the year has been decided and all paperwork has been completed

for it. Only a few more months and I can say farewell to this blasted school."

"That is great. Oh you will like it at Durmstrang. Just wait until you meet my sister Ivanna. I am sure the two of you will get along wonderfully." Benedikt, who sat next to Cassiopeia, looked happily at the girl, glad that they would not have to leave her behind after this year.

"But that is not all. My father also overheard Dumbledore ordering my brother to befriend Rose at all costs to save her from the darkness." Alex only snorted when he heard that. From what Rose had told him she would never go anywhere close her housemates again after all they had done to her.

"And apparently my father has been ordered to stay away from Hogwarts." She laughed again as she reread that particular passage. "He has tried to fix Dumbledore's crooked nose with his fists."

Several people at the table chuckled, but Alex had a more contemplative look on his face. "How did that happen? I mean wasn't your father a protege of Dumbledore just like that blind fool Potter?"

"Yes, but that is long past. My father dislikes the old man's stubbornness. As it seemed Dumbledore has said something that upset my father greatly. As he describes it the goat has advised him to kick me out of the family to prevent the funds of the Black family to end up in the hands of dark wizards." Lilith gasped when she heard that, as did several others. "That was about the worst thing Dumbledore could have said to my father. When he was younger his mother kicked him out of the family because of his beliefs, he knows what it means to lose your family and does not wish it upon anyone. He had friends that supported him, else he would not have been able to make it through that time." Cassiopeia paused for a moment before she continued. "In the end he was reinstated by his mother, mostly because he was the only possible heir to the family and due to the fact that he fell in love with and married a proper pure blood woman. My grandmother's portrait has a soft spot for my mother, she is after all from a so called dark family like the Blacks. In fact my maternal uncle was a well known Death Eater, though we do not like to advertise that fact. And my mother only had disdain for

her brother and his decisions so my fathers friends saw little reason to distrust her."

Benedikt who sat next to her smiled comfortingly at her before he spoke himself. "Don't worry, Cassiopeia. The old man won't get through with his delusional plans. We won't let him mess up your life, right Alex?"

Alex simply nodded wordlessly. He was unsure whether he should be worried about how far Dumbledore was willing to go or if he should laugh at the man's shortsightedness. But it didn't matter as his thoughts were rudely interrupted when High Master Karkaroff entered the mess hall. Usually the man avoided the room and with it most of his students interactions, but apparently he now had a very good reason to come here.

Much to his chagrin the room did not quiet down as most students stubbornly ignored the head of their school. He looked angrily until he finally snapped. "Will you all shut up for one moment so we get this over with, I have no intention to spend more time here then necessary." The room quieted down, to Karkaroff this was a good thing, but now all students glared at him openly. Alex looked condescendingly at him, while Benedikt and Victor actually stood up to get rid of the unwanted man. A bit startled Igor continued. "Since all of you stubbornly stay away from Hogwart's Great Hall, there has been a special announcement today that is important for all of you. Later this month on the 24th December there will be a special ball, the Jule Ball. All of you are advised to attend, do it just this once, I want you all to attend something at this school. There will be ministry officials and reporters present so you all are required, else it could harm our schools reputation." Alex looked rather displeased. It wasn't Karkaroff's sudden attempt to order them around, but he had been happy that he wouldn't have to attend the Winter Ball at the German Ministry just to come here and be forced to another Ball with people he found even more annoying.

"Fine, Igor. We will be there, see it as your only Christmas present. I heard you like that particular muggle holiday." Alex grinned condescendingly at the Durmstrang High Master. Karkaroff could only glare at the young Grindelwald, not daring to reprimand Alex at the moment.

"Ah there is also another matter, Grindelwald. Dumbledore has requested that you come to his office at the earliest convenience to discuss certain things he wouldn't disclose to me." Igor almost smirked gleefully, he knew how much Alex had come to despise Dumbledore.

"With requested you mean he ordered you to tell me, like he orders his own pet Death Eater around like a mangy mutt. I can already guess what the old goat wants this time." Alex sighed in exasperation before he stood up. "You will come along, Igor. If things gets messy I want you to do your job as our High Master instead of running away like you did in the past." He then turned towards his sister, seeing her expectant look. "Elena, you stay here and keep an eye on everything. Should I not return in a few hours send out the letters I have written and make sure this country burns to the ground." He spoke with a cold, calculating business tone, making it obviously clear that he meant every word.

"Fine, be that way." Elena huffed annoyed. "But don't expect me to spare any of these idiots that stray too close to the ship. I want to fight, too."

"Do as you please. Benedikt, Lilith, you come with me. Seven more to me, if they want a fight we give them one." The group of ten students and one disgruntled High Master soon left the ship on their way to the dreaded meeting with Hogwarts Headmaster.

At Nurmengard Gellert Grindelwald was currently talking to one of his most faithful followers, the father of his heir and husband of his only daughter, Conrad Jaeger. Ever since the man had more or less stumbled upon this prison the plans of Gellert had changed drastically. The sudden appearance of his daughter was just another surprise in a series of many different events that had worked in his favor.

Selene, his daughter, had initially been a sore disappointment to him. She was weak, in skills and mind, but there was one thing that she was good at. Gaining the loyalty of many men and women to follow his cause. Her calm and peaceful demeanor lulled people into a sense of safety and peace as long as they were near her. That was something that she had inherited from her mother. Lorraine Rivet, he remembered the woman that had given birth to his only child. They had spent only a single night together, not long before he went out

to fight his former friend Albus Dumbledore. But he knew even if he had won he would not have returned to that French witch, at that time he had no plans to tie himself down with a wife and children, such things would have only harmed his ambitions. He had never seen her again after that night, but when he first saw his daughter he clearly saw the resemblance to her mother.

And then the next disappointment, his daughters apparent infertility. No one knew why, there were rumors that someone knew about her heritage and tried to destroy the Grindelwald line that way, but they never had any direct suspects nor proof to the claims at that time. But that problem had been taken care of in a befitting manner and now Gellert Grindelwald had a worthy heir of his own bloodline, even though the boy was born to another family. But that was merely a blurry memory now, no one would be able to trace the ritual they had used to make the boy a Grindelwald.

But Dumbledore had become increasingly troublesome and aggressive towards his heir. But at the same time the old fool made mistakes, mistakes they would exploit to their fullest now.

"Tell me, Conrad, what has come of your attempts to oust Dumbledore from his office at the ICW?"

"The vote will be the first topic in the new year. It is almost certain that he will lose his position as Supreme Mugwump and if the Brits have any sense in preserving at least a bit of their integrity he will be ousted as their Chief Warlock soon after that. Fudge is extremely susceptible to our suggestions, he has the delusion that he will be remembered as a man of peace and honor with his attempts to appease us." Conrad smiled gleefully, he was shocked and enraged when he heard what had happened during the first task, but his son had promptly urged him to use the incident to weaken Dumbledore's influence on Europe.

"Good, once that fool has lost his position in the ICW we will work towards the next stage of our plan." Gellert Grindelwald had a look of anticipation on his face, decades of waiting and planning were finally coming to the aspired result.

"Are you sure that it is wise to..."

"Yes, Conrad. It is time that I leave the confines of this place behind and start on furthering our plans from a place where I can do more than issue orders. The future we all aspire is soon within our reach." The old man's exclamation caused Conrad to shudder a bit, but luckily Gellert did not see it. Conrad knew that should Gellert Grindelwald leave Nurmengard that much earlier than they had anticipated, the old man would do serious damage to Alexander's plans. For Conrad this was the sign that soon the time would come when he would have to decide between his loyalty towards his son and his oath towards his master.

As Alex and his group reached the gargoyle that guarded the entrance to the headmaster's office a stern looking witch, the deputy headmistress McGonagall, was already waiting for their arrival. The witch looked rather displeased at the big group of ten students and one grumbling High Master and couldn't help but frown.

"I hope you do not expect all those people to enter with you, Mr Grindelwald, the headmaster's office is no meeting room for such big groups."

Alex gave the witch a dark look, he was up there before and he knew that the office could easily accommodate a dozen people and still have enough room for surprise visitors. This could only mean that they either want to take him down with a smaller group or there were already other guests present. Either option was not appealing to Alex.

"It will have to do. If your master's office is too small I demand that he reschedules this meeting and chooses a more fitting room, else we will be leaving. Was that clear or is there any need to write it down for you?" His condescending tone caused McGonagall to scowl at him, but she did not retort, but simply turned around and spoke the password to open the entry to the office.

The group slowly ascended the stairs and entered the headmaster's office. Karkaroff entered first, befitting of his station as High Master as Alex assured him, but really as cannon fodder should enemies await them inside that room. Lilith walked behind Alex, closely followed by Benedikt, both wizards guarding the girl as Alex would not let any harm befall her. He had only allowed her to come along because she would have caused a scene if he had demanded that

she would stay on the ship. She would not have let him face this situation alone, no matter what arguments he had.

As Alex looked around he couldn't help but scowl even more, inside of the office were both Potter's, that freaky teacher Moody and Dumbledore's pet Death Eater Severus Snape. The old goat himself sat behind his desk on his throne like chair, smiling and eyes twinkling as if this was a normal visit to ones grandparents instead of a meeting between the leaders of two rivaling factions on the brink of war.

"Ah, Mr Grindelwald and... guests. Welcome." For a moment Alex could have sworn he saw annoyance flash across Dumbledore's face when he saw how many Covenant members were present. He had expected Alex, maybe his fiance and his sister, but not ten Covenant members glaring at him with their hands itching towards their wands.

"Why are we here, Dumbledore. Spit it out, unlike you I have things to do, I work myself instead of using puppets to do my bidding." Alex sat down in the empty chair in front of the desk, Benedikt at his right shoulder, Lilith at his left. The rest, including Karkaroff stood a few feet behind, just like Dumbledore's lapdogs stood behind him, glaring at the Durmstrang students. "Is this about Rose? Is that why those people are here? I've told you people before, I don't make such decisions for others, she joined because it was her will to do so and not because I forced her."

James Potter stiffened with barely restrained anger when Alex said the name of his daughter, next to him his wife had to stifle a sob as she remembered her daughter's words from earlier. Dumbledore though remained unfazed by Alex words and continued his twinkling. "No, this meeting actually is about you, my boy."

Alex glared when the old goat called him 'my boy' again, despite many warnings not to do so. But before Alex could say anything the old wizard continued. "For years I have collected information about you. Your... family hid their secrets very well, but even the best kept secret is bound to come out one day."

Alex chuckled darkly as he heard the old wizard's words, not willing to let himself be fooled by mere words. "And what is it that you believe to know about me, headmaster? My favorite color? My

favorite dish? Or have you come across the well kept secret that I am going to marry next year?" Alex voice was mocking, some of the other Durmstrang students making no gesture to hide their amusement and laughter.

"This is no laughing matter, Alexander, or should I say Harry Potter..." With a smug grin Dumbledore leaned forward, looking Alex directly in the eyes. But there he saw no uncertainty, no disbelief, but pure and utter amusement.

"So this is your new scheme of the month, old fool? Claiming that I am your long dead savior. The son of these... imbeciles?" He made a gesture towards the Potter's without even looking at them before he laughed in the old man's face.

"It may be hard to believe, but you are in fact Harry James Potter. You were stolen in the dead of the night only three days after you vanquished Voldemort back in 1981. They raised you, the great hope of the Light, to fight against your own family and their beliefs."

"Are you calling my parents criminals, Mr Dumbledore? I want to make sure I heard you right, because this will add slander and libel to the long list of charges you will have to answer for once I

have dragged your bony ass in front of the ICW."

"The Grindelwalds are not your family, Harry. They are dark and abominable people that stole the child of an upstanding light family to raise him as a weapon." Dumbledore's voice was filled with so much insistence that some people in the room had to actually question whom the old man was trying to convince of this, Alex or himself.

Lilith stood next to Alex with narrowed eyes, her anger contained, but she knew she would not stay silent for long if the old man would continue to slander the family that she had come to love as her own over the last years.

Benedikt wasn't faring any different from Lilith, but unlike her, he had no qualms to speak his mind. "You Brits are really a pathetic bunch. I have known the Grindelwald family for years now and I warn you, continue to speak ill of them and I will make sure you are missing

some important parts before Alex drags you in front of the ICW." Alex smiled when he heard his best friend's words, he knew he could always count on his friends should things get messy. He also felt Lilith's hand on his shoulder, her grip getting tighter as she tried to control her anger.

"The Grindelwalds have always been magnificent actors, they can fool not just the simple minded..." He looked condescendingly at Benedikt, "... but also those of the best upbringing and education. "At his last words he looked at Lilith with a undecipherable expression. "You may see them as honorable people, but in truth they are no better than dark lord that they inherited their name from."

"You talk all high and mighty, insulting my parents, but do even have any evidence?" Alex voice was bare any emotion, so cold everything brushed by his breath would surely freeze instantly.

"Well let us start with the most simply signs. There are no traces of the existence of any person called Alexander Grindelwald before 1981. There is virtually now witness, neither to the boy's birth nor his upbringing for supposed first three years of his life. First evidence that could be found was from the beginning of 1982, a healer that claimed to have met the child that was later introduced as Alexander Gellert Grindelwald. First hard evidence of the existence of a Grindelwald heir was from 1989, the boy's supposed eleventh birthday. I seriously question how could there have been a Grindelwald heir in the early years until 89 without anyone noticing it? Considering how much that family and their allies have advertised him afterward it seems rather odd."

"Laughable. My parents hid my existence when I was still younger to give me a normal life in my early years without the public pounding on our door every other day in a hope to profit from a Grindelwald heir. Considering the shameless old bastard and his group of criminals that came to crash my eleventh birthday that was a rather prudent decision. I had a nice childhood. After my eleventh birthday and my subsequent start of schooling at Durmstrang secrecy was no longer possible and it was better to profit from my new found fame. I would have expected a man like you would have enough brains to figure that out by himself. But apparently you have grown senile

with your old age." Alex grinned smugly at the old wizard, much to the anger of his lapdogs behind him.

"You claim that you have had a happy childhood. A childhood filled with training to fight? A childhood that effectively ended your youth and forced you to mature at a young age?" Dumbledore's words came out like an accusation, but Alex merely shrugged them off.

"It was people like you that forced me to mature faster than any child should ever grow up. After all there was a certain old man trying to steal me from my family at age eleven, the same old fool that now has the audacity to slander my parents and try to turn me against them with his lies. As I said I had a happy childhood until the moment you showed up in my life."

"A happy childhood? Being forced to participate in raids, killing innocents is what you call a happy childhood? How old were you when you killed the family of the girl you now call your sister? Nine? Ten? If that is really what you call a happy childhood the Grindelwalds have corrupted you more than I had initially feared."

Lilith and Benedikt both couldn't help but gasp when Dumbledore revealed that certain part of Alex' past. And Alex' silence to this accusation only confirmed this statement. Karkaroff looked completely unsurprised, he had known how Elena had come to the Grindelwald family for years now. It was one of the few real secrets Alex had shared with the High Master to gain his trust during his early years at Durmstrang.

"What happened that night is between me and Elena. Don't act as if you knew Elena's family. They were thieves, they had stolen from us and later offered themselves to retrieve the stolen item to cheat us of even more money. When we came to reclaim what was ours they attacked without a moment's hesitation and died in battle. You know nothing so don't you dare to judge me or my actions that night. Elena has long forgiven me and according to her they deserved worse than death." Alex spoke with pure hate as he addressed Dumbledore this time. This was a personal matter and any attempt to use it against him would be a one way ticket to hell. He never wanted it to get out further than the few people that knew it, not to protect himself but out of respect for his sister. That is why he never told his friends or his fiancée.

Dumbledore merely resumed his smug look and opened a drawer of his desk and retrieved a scroll. "Was it this scroll that your family was so desperate to retrieve, so they did not even stop from murdering those Veela?"

To his chagrin he did not hold the scroll firm enough and Alex could easily summon it with a wand-less charm. He unrolled the old scroll and looked interested at the contents of it. "My my, this is some serious blood magic described on this scroll. Aww don't look at me like that, unlike your students we get a thorough education at Durmstrang, including the most important ancient languages like this one."

Hiding his anger, Dumbledore resumed his contemplative mask. "That you can actually read and understand such dark magic is just another sign that Durmstrang is a school totally unfitting for any child. But as you can see it is a very detailed description of a ritual for a blood adoption, a practice long forbidden in most of Europe. This is the next clue that you are not who your parents claim you are. They used this dark ritual on a small child to steal him from his rightful and loving parents..."

He could not finish his sentence as he saw to his shock that the scroll quickly burned up in Alex hands, a dark aura appearing around him. "I told you I will not allow you to slander my parents. This scroll means nothing and it was most certainly not what the Veela had stolen from us."

He was still shaking with anger as Lilith stepped before him and tightly hugged him, whispering silently into his ear. "Please, Alex. Calm down. That old man just tries to get a rise out of you so he can exploit it. Do not let him win. His lies will not affect us, please, for me calm down." Her words calmed him down visibly, but his anger still prevented him from speaking his mind without the wish to maim Dumbledore where he sat. Meanwhile Benedikt had moved in front of the pair, his hand on his wand to defend his friends. All the other Durmstrang students following his example to defend their leader should anything happen.

Lilith's action shocked Dumbledore and his group of followers, so far they had only assumed that the relationship between Alex and Lilith was based purely on the duty that normally binds pure blood children together in their arranged marriages. But seeing this made

it clear that both teens shared a deeper emotional connection. This caused Dumbledore to frown in annoyance, this would make it even more difficult and Lilith was a girl that would pose a lot of problems and was impossible to get rid of because of her fathers political power.

"You people must be truly out of your minds if you think such idiotic claims could hold any truth. Even despite that blood ritual you still are too dumb to see that Alexander is years older then your so called savior. To even think he might be the same person is ludicrous. Your snake molester you call a dark lord must have truly fucked up your minds." Lilith spoke coldly to the people before her, all time never letting go of Alex until he had finally calmed down enough.

Her taunt of Voldemort caused Moody to look darkly at Lilith, but no one really payed him any attention as he had yet to say a word.

"There are potions and such..." Dumbledore's pet Death Eater spoke up, but was quickly silenced by Alex.

"No such potions are permanent as you should well know as a supposed potions master. Or are you now making up new potions just to support your own point?" Alex spoke calm and collected, but his voice was still void any warmth. "You either try something better or else we are leaving. But you can already expect serious repercussion for what you have attempted here."

"And what about your close relationship to little Rose? You come here and all of a sudden you start being protective of the girl and genuinely care for her in a way only siblings would care for each other. You sometimes seem as close as only twins could ever be..."

"Don't make me laugh, old man. Yes I do care for the girl, but only because I can empathize with her. You really fucked up her life as much you tried to fuck up mine. We take care of her because your little red-tie lapdogs have made it their mission to torture her every day. According to her they did so for years and you knew it without doing anything." Alex glared at Dumbledore, but the old man remained unaffected.

"All Rose experiences are some bouts of inter school rivalry..." The headmaster started but was rudely interrupted.

"Don't you dare trying to twist this to your own liking. No child should be forced to endure what you have willingly subjected her to."

"You know nothing, don't talk as if you know my daughter... You are the reason her fellow students are wary of her, because she has spent time with your bloody Covenant. Without you her life would be much better." James raged, his fists shaking in anger.

"You better shut the fuck up, lapdog. I once considered you to be a decent man, but now I see that you are nothing more than a gullible lapdog. You have been here for months and you have seen your daughter's problems long before she even got into contact with us." Alex looked at James with utmost contempt. "And just for your information, without the Covenant your daughter would be long dead, killed by the dragon your master has forced her to fight against in this ridiculous tournament. I sometimes really wonder if it wasn't him who entered Rose into this competition against her own wish." James looked like he wanted to rebut, but Alex wouldn't let him. "Just shut up fool, before you embarrass your family more than you already have. Is this all, Dumbledore, or do you have another insane claim you wish to share with us?"

"There is one last evidence. The most important and undeniable evidence to be precise. Your scar, or to be more precise your scars." At this Alex hand instinctively traced the line of the scar that marred his face. "Yes, that scar is not one, but in fact two scars. And the older of the two scars is from the year 1981, exactly the year that Harry Potter received his famous scar from the Killing Curse of Lord Voldemort. If it weren't for that second scar that was added years later the first scar would still resemble a lightning-bolt."

"That is utterly ridiculous. As I have told you once some years ago I have this scar from my mentor who wished to teach me a lesson. There is only one scar, there is no second scar and especially no lightning-bolt.."

"Your mentor, as in your supposed grandfather, the dark lord Grindelwald?" Dumbledore spoke accusingly again, hoping that this revelation would come as a shock, but he did not get any reaction from Alexander or any of his group. Resigned he tried to get a rise with another comment. "And there is no lying about the second scar."

I have the medical scan from our school nurse that confirms that there are indeed two scars with the years those scars were caused."

"Such scans can be falsified far too easily. And considering that the person who did that scan was just another of your toadies... That woman is not trustworthy and will be reported soon anyways. The things I have heard about the bullying at this school... children coming to your hospital wing to get treated repeatedly. Such things must be reported to proper outside authorities, after all the safety of the students is not warranted. The fact that nothing has happened, moreover that it has even worsened this year can only mean that this woman tries to keep this silent. Whether she does this on your order or not, does not make any difference. This woman has committed a criminal offense and will spend some quality time in prison for it if any of the accusations I have heard are true."

"You can't do this, Madam Pomfrey is an upstanding member of the school staff and has only ever acted in the best interest of the students." Dumbledore was outraged by this, none of his trusted staff members should get into trouble just because she saw the infractions of the students as nothing more than harmless rivalry between the houses.

"I can and I will. The farce you have tried to force on me here will have consequences as well, Mr Dumbledore. You will be out of your offices before this school year comes to an end and if I have my way you will be in prison much earlier. You are a menace to all of Europe, your narrow minded and bigoted sight of this world can not and will not be tolerated. You believe you can fuck up other peoples lives and act like Merlin reincarnated just because you have defeated my grandfather, but you are a petty man with no future." Alex stood up and walked towards the door without looking back. As quick as his group has entered the room they had left it now, leaving only the High Master behind who smirked at Dumbledore like the cat who ate the canary.

"If I were you I would seriously consider retirement, Dumbledore. Grindelwald will destroy you and your reputation otherwise." With a dark chuckle Karkaroff left the office to follow his students back to their ship.

Of all remaining occupants in the office it was Snape who first spoke up again with disdain in his voice and his nastiest sneer on his face.

"That brat certainly is arrogant enough to be a spawn of Potter, that is for sure. The nerve.."

"Shut the hell up, Snivellus. That evil, contemptible boy is no son of mine. It is clear that such a vicious person must be the spawn of a dark wizard." Snape got ready to retort after hearing his hated nickname from his school time, but Dumbledore shut them up quickly.

"Silence, both of you. That boy is Harry Potter, I have no doubt about it. We will have to try harder to convince the boy of the truth. I will not let the dark side use our savior against us. But there are some obstacles. That girl, his fiancée will be a problem as well. She obviously has a large influence on him, an influence we must break. I doubt that she could be swayed to our side."

"Aye, we should get her to disappear, I am sure that she is the cause of his behavior." Moody spoke with barely concealed contempt for the girl. "She must certainly be a dark witch, a witch that has delusions of grandeur and looks down on the greatest dark lord of our time. Surely she believes with the boy at her side she can be a dark Queen or something like that. Just let me handle that, I will make her disappear."

"No, Alastor. Any act against that girl will cause a war, she is the daughter of the German minister. We must tread carefully around her if we want to separate her from Harry permanently."

"I stand firm with my point, that boy is not my son. Believe what you want, I don't care. If I see that monster anywhere near my daughter again I will make him regret it." Angrily James stalked out of the office, closely followed by his sobbing wife.

Dumbledore sighed in exasperation. This meeting had not gone as he had hoped. In fact it had ended in the worst possible way for him. And with the scroll destroyed he had even lost one of his most incriminating evidences. He would just have to try harder, he was sure that he knew the truth now and he would not stop until he had Harry Potter, the savior of wizarding Britain on his side.

Back on the ship Elena paced around on the deck, sending worried glances towards the castle ever so often. It has already been more than an hour since Alex group had left and so far they had received

no sign of them. She was slowly growing restless with every other passing minute.

Victor was leaning on the reeling, watching the worried Veela with an amused expression. He couldn't help but smirk at the way she looked, working herself in a hysteria out of worry. He was sure that nothing had happened, so far there had been no major explosions and the castle had not been burned down, so he was safe to assume that Alex had no reason to fight at this moment. In fact he would actually welcome a little fight, their school work was minimal outside of the lessons so he had virtually nothing to do.

"Relax, Elena. Your brother is probably already on his way back to us and you fuss here over nothing."

Elena stopped her pacing to glare at Victor, who, much to her annoyance, was no longer leaning against the reeling, but now standing much closer to her than she would have liked.

"Well, maybe I know something to distract you from your worries." Elena narrowed her eyes as she heard his words, not really knowing what to make any sense of his words. "Elena, would you consider going to the Jule Ball with me as my date for that evening?"

To say she was shocked would have been an understatement, much to his rising amusement. "Of all the things ... you ask me out on a date? Here? Now? Are you mad?" She hissed at Victor but the Bulgarian seemed unaffected by it.

"No quite the opposite, I am completely healthy. To know that you care so much about my well being is so heart warming. But believe me I have only honorable intentions."

"As if. I am not one of your fan girls, Victor. Go and ask out one of them. I have no interest in you whatsoever." With these words she turned away from him, resuming her searching look at the castle entrance.

"Believe me, Elena, I do not fancy you in any way. But considering my fan girls and their almost rabid pursuit of my person I would much rather go to the ball with someone I can call just a friend. The other girls would only get the wrong message should I pick one of them."

"Oh you poor slob. I am so sorry for your hardship. Do you have no other worries at the moment? Things like that war that is about to break out any day now?" Not even once did she turn around to look at Victor, completely missing his mock hurt look.

"Unlike you I try to not think about it every wake moment. You only worry yourself to death. The Ball is a chance to unwind a bit, even with that bunch of enemies and idiots there. Come on, Elena, do me this favor just this once." She still made no motion towards him. "Well see it from this side, by going with me to the ball your brother would finally stop harassing us about that date he promised me with you after the world cup."

This caused Elena to turn around and look at him furiously. "Do you have no shame, my brother said that in jest and here you attempt to claim me like a price, like I am unfree, the possession of a man to be given away on command." She was only moments from hexing him at a place that was bound to hurt him the most.

Victor quickly raised his hands in a placating gesture. "Peace, Elena. I do not want to face you in a fight, we both know you have yet to beat me in a duel. All I propose is that we attend the ball, as friends, nothing more. For our both sakes. I know for sure that you are not interest in any of the other boys on this ship and that you have no intention to go with any of them to the ball. Your brother has his fiance, so he is not an option. And Benedikts flirtations would cause you to neuter him before the first dance has ended. I also believe that he has his eyes on that Black girl. So that leaves only me as an option or to stay on the ship the entire night. Staying on the ship would also mean to be unable to help Alex should something... unexpected happen during the ball." This struck a chord in Elena and her angry posture lessened visibly.

"Fine." She growled at him. "I will go to the ball with you. But don't you dare to get any wrong ideas because of that." She looked towards the castle again after saying this and much to her relieve her brother and his group emerged from the building and walked towards the ship in a fast pace.

"See, I told you that nothing has happened. You just worried because of nothing." Victor stated with a smug look.

"Then why is he in such a hurry?" Elena questioned the Bulgarian, but for this he actually had no answer ready. As Alex came closer they saw the angry look on his face and could only wonder what the old goat had done to enrage the Grindelwald heir this much.

As Alex had reentered the ship he had quickly stalked past all the waiting people towards the training room to vent his anger on the training dummies. It was Lilith who informed the puzzled Elena and an oddly contemplative Victor about what had just happened in the headmaster's office. Elena was equally enraged as her brother when she heard the old man's accusations against their parents. But she quickly deflated when Lilith asked the one question that had burned on her mind since the meeting.

"Elena, is it true... what Dumbledore had said about Alex being involved with the death of your family? It was the only claim that Alex did not deny when the old man hurled all that shit at him." Elena stiffened under the scrutiny of Lilith, Benedikt and Victor, all three waiting for her answer.

"It is true... my mother and my sister died in a fight against Alex, his father and a small group of their loyal supporters... It was Alex himself that killed my older sister Marie..." Elena's voice had become a whisper, barely audible. Lilith couldn't help herself but gasp when she heard the truth from Elena. "Do not judge him, I never did. He saved me that day, saved me from my old life that would have lead to my early grave no matter the outcome of the fight that night... and he saved my life when one of his more racist allies tried to kill me..."

"That person who wanted to kill you does not happen to be my uncle Fedor?" Benedikt asked her in a somber tone. She said nothing but nodded at him. "That explains why he still hates you so much and murmurs that he should have just cursed you when he had the chance..."

"Alex is a good person. My life before I met him was an endless nightmare... he saved me and did so much for me... he made me his sister and all... there are no words to describe the gratefulness and loyalty I feel for him. Don't let Dumbledore win by thinking any different of him because of this." Elena looked pleadingly at her friends, especially at Lilith.

"Alex has never let me down, I won't do it either. This changes nothing." Benedikt spoke with conviction and left the group to walk towards the training room to join his friend.

"I knew he had a dark past from the very first time I met him, the only surprise is that you are part of it, Elena. I don't care for what he has done in the past, the future is what counts now." Victor's words were still ringing in Elena's ears after the Bulgarian had already left the room.

Now it was just Lilith and Elena in the room, an oppressive silence making every passing moment harder for Elena to bear. But finally Lilith spoke. "You trust him so unconditionally. You support him, you... love him regardless of what he has done... To you he will always be your brother... to me he will always be the man I love and support. This changes nothing, Elena." Elena released a breath she had already been holding for too long, she looked towards Lilith and only saw calmness and her supportive smile she sometimes had. "Come, Elena. Let us go and find 'our' Alex." Elena nodded, a large, relieved smile gracing her lips as she followed Lilith out of the room.

Alex was still seething in anger, annihilating one training dummy after another, his spells gradually increasing in strength and destructiveness. He did not even register the other students leave the room in fear of his current temper, nor did he see the worried look he got from Professor Kumiega, who watched him silently from the other side of the room. Even the professor did not dare approach him in his enraged state.

Benedikt was the first to approach Alex, though he was cautious enough to have his wand ready to cast appropriate shield charms should he somehow get between Alex and whatever he wanted to destroy at the moment.

"Alex... Alex calm down, buddy." Alex did hear his words, but barely reacted to them. Instead of stopping he just started yelling.

"That stupid old goat fucker has the audacity to slander my family... my parents, the persons that have raised me with the utmost love and devotion any parent can have for their child. He fucking claims I am the son of his bloody lapdogs as if he expects me to suddenly start acting all cozy around them and forsake all I was before. Is he raving mad?"

"Apparently he has really lost it now... Dumbledore is even more desperate than we had anticipated if he grasps for such ridiculous straws now." Benedikt spoke firmly, still wary of Alex movements. "But it won't do us any good if you trash our ship in your anger. Let us vent our anger on some of those stupid red-ties, they deserve a good beating and that would send a signal to Dumbledore." Benedikt seemed overeager to finally get his chance to pound some common sense into the heads of some Hogwarts students, now he had the chance that Alex would finally allow him to do it. But alas he was out of luck as Lilith and Elena arrived before Alex responded.

"Alex! Don't you even think about it. We are close enough to war as it is, we do not need to be the ones to start it so they can pin all responsibility on us." Lilith spoke authoritatively, looking scolding at Benedikt who had the decency to look abashed.

"I will not let him get through with this shit any longer... HE WILL PAY!" With another wave of his wand another training dummy exploded into splinters.

"Yes, Alex, he will pay. But not now, not so early. We can't act now, it is far too soon. He still has too much power. But the time will come when we will have our revenge on those who have wronged us." Elena came close to her brother, holding him back from casting another spell with a hand on his wand arm. "You promised me a better future, do not throw it away because of your anger. I know it all tends to get too much here in this god-forsaken school, but you told me to keep my temper in check when I see the bitch so you will do the same when you see Dumbledore." He looked at her, his eyes still filled with rage, but his features seemed to soften.

Lilith came up on his other side, taking his other hand in her own. "Please, Alex, listen to us. Everything will turn out alright if he doesn't let the old goat fool us into making hasty decisions. Please, do it for me, calm down for me and keep a cool head." She took his hand and placed it on her cheek, looking at him softly as the anger disappeared from his features.

He gently stroke her cheek as he drew some deep, calming breaths. "You are right... all of you. Thank you... for your friendship, your

support... for everything." He looked at all three of them with a calm and gentle expression.

"We are always here for you, Alex." Lilith spoke softly to him before she leaned forward and kissed him delicately. He embraced her tightly, not wanting to let go of her again lest he feared she could disappear and he would be all alone against Dumbledore. Elena and Benedikt stepped a few feet back, giving the couple some privacy, but both looked contently at the display of affection.

"Thank you, Lilith. For being here and for loving me." He whispered into her ear as he rested his head on her shoulder.

"I will be with you. Always." At her heartfelt words he only tightened his embrace for a moment before he drew back from her and gave her another lingering kiss.

This day Dumbledore had tried to fuck his life over with another seemingly ridiculous story in his attempts to sway Alex to his side. But once more he failed with his ambitions. But one thing had become painfully clear once more, Dumbledore was stubborn and clearly delusional, two things that made him incredibly dangerous to Alex and all those he cared for.

AN: Well... I hope I did not disappoint you people too much with the way the truth has come out. I won't make this one of the many stories where Harry suddenly gives up everything in his life and all he stood for just because he finds out he is a Potter. At the moment Dumbledore's claim that Alex is a Potter sounds utterly ridiculous to him and all others and I will have him deal with this in an appropriate way.

Actually I had planned to keep the meeting with Dumbledore much shorter, but in the end it got a bit out of hand and I had no desire to cut parts out of it. Originally I had planned to have the Jule Ball in this chapter, but now it will be one of the main parts in the next. I am sure my readers will understand that, else the chapter would have easily gotten twice as long as it already is and I am no fan of 20k word long chapters.

This time I have also added some minor information on Selene Grindelwald, i. e. a brief mention of her mother Lorraine Rivet. So far I don't know if that woman will have any importance, she seems

more like a side character for the sequel... another idea to add to the already 150 pages long notices with ideas for the sequel to this story.

Also I have mentioned a bit about Sirius, why he is Lord Black despite his former involvement with Dumbledore. Some may say Sirius would never even look at a girl from a Death Eater family, but actually I always saw him as a more open minded person. The possibility that he would fall in love with a girl that stands against her families beliefs just like him surely would make sense. Actually I once had a story about how Sirius and his possible later wife would have met, but I took it down when there were barely 100 hits in two months after I had posted the story. Well maybe there are one or two readers here that have actually read that story and remember which Death Eater Sirius wife Helena is related to.

I also know that I should most likely look for a Beta sometime in the future, but I am a bit apprehensive to handing over my new chapters to a person I don't know and I quite frankly have no idea what so ever how it works here on FF. Well I will make a decision about this soon if I can find a person that I can trust with my work.

Oh well I guess there isn't much more to say here, I hope it was an interesting chapter, I know the last one was a bit dull, but with the confrontation here I believe it has become at least a bit more bearable.

And as always please continue to write many Reviews, i greatly appreciate it, even the criticism as long as it is constructive.

Oh and by the way a bit of shameless self promotion, please have a look at my other story as well, so far the interest on that story has been less then modest.

Until next time...

Chapter 23: Love and Loss

Minerva McGonagall was incensed, no beyond that, she was absolutely seething in anger. It was not often that her students saw her like this, but this day everyone was sure that the first poor bloke to stand in her way would get himself killed for sure. In this state the usually stern witch stormed in the direction of the headmasters office to blow some steam.

Headmaster Albus Dumbledore did not yet know of the disaster that was about to haunt him soon. He sat in his office, still pondering on how convince the Potter boy that the Grindelwalds are actually cruel and abominable dark wizards that he should loath and fight against to protect the light side. His meeting the day before had not resulted like had hoped for... he really believed he could steamroll the boy with his assumptions and get the boy to believe his word and his evidence. But the boy was reluctant... no more like repulsed by the mere thought that his parents would have lied to him. The Grindelwalds apparently did a thorough job when they brainwashed Harry Potter.

Albus was suddenly shaken out of his musings as the door to his office was thrown open and his deputy stormed the office with a furious expression on her face.

"Minerva? What is the meaning of this? Is everything alright?" For a moment he looked worried at the witch before him, but then she threw something on his desk and started to rant.

"Just look at this. This garbage is suddenly everywhere in this castle, even in the Gryffindor common room. Can you imagine that? Even in the domain of my Lions and I know that it wasn't Rose Potter who brought them there, she has not yet been released from the hospital wing."

The headmaster looked at the small pamphlet that Minerva had brought along. He frowned when he saw the title of the pamphlet... 'The Unity Theses'. "You say these things haven been found everywhere?"

"Yes, Albus. In all common rooms, in the Great Hall... everywhere. There are a lot of students working for that accursed Covenant. We should finally act, Albus. You must expel them, they are definitely

threatening our own students..." The witch looked worried at her superior. But Albus merely sighed deeply.

"That is not so easy, Minerva. So far they have not warranted such a treatment... yet. Also the young Ms Black and several other students have already completed the paperwork to switch schools at the end of this year." He frowned when he thought about Cassiopeia, he had always feared she might fall back to the dark path her ancestors have followed when she was sorted into Slytherin. Unlike her brother, who was a proud Lion, she had also never shown any will to listen to him. And now she had fallen to the Covenant and her father was actually willing to allow her to be part of this dangerous group.

"Good riddance I say. That girl was a dark stain on our school from the very beginning. School life will be much better for Antares without her antagonizing presence, this way he can focus on his school work without worrying about his dark sister." Albus looked disapprovingly at his deputy, Minerva had instantly dislike young Cassiopeia from the moment the girl had not been sorted into her house. She had hoped for Sirius children to be in their fathers house, but when Cassiopeia was sorted into Slytherin of all places it was a great disappointment for her. But that her resentment pushed the girl even further down the dark path never crossed Minerva's mind and no matter how often Albus admonished her to show the girl more leniency, there was no visible change in Minerva's behavior towards the girl. Even worse, when her brother was sorted into Gryffindor, the old witch often compared his 'great results' with Cassiopeia's supposedly meager ones.

"This is no laughing matter, Minerva. We cannot allow the Black family to return to their dark ways, I hoped with Sirius they would now remain as a pillar of strength for the light, but there are always some black sheep in every family. Just like we must save Harry Potter from the darkness, we should not allow any of our students to fall onto this destructive path."

"Albus even you must see that Grindelwald does not believe you, even I have my doubts about your theory. That this boy is actually a Potter seems so utterly ridiculous to me... We should focus on how to undo the damage they have already done to the school and how to get them to leave Hogwarts as soon as possible instead of following such outrageous ideas."

Albus frowned at the witch, not really listening to her words. To him it was clear what had to be done, the only question for him was how to do it. And then there was the ICW meeting in the new year... the Grindelwald family's attempt to get him ousted of all his offices. No he would not accept a defeat there, he was an excellent politician and all of Europe needed his guidance. This was when he made the decision to make his assumptions about the real whereabouts of Harry James Potter known to the general public. This would at least cost the Grindelwald's some support and at best the ICW would start a thorough investigation into the matter and uncover the truth and forget about the accusations against him. Yes that would be the best course of action.

For Rose Potter this day had started worse then the last few days had ended. Her mother had returned to the hospital wing some hours after they had their argument, but they had not said a single word to each other. Lily just sat there next to the bed of her daughter, reading or doing something else, but never really acknowledging her daughter. For Rose it was clear that her mother was only there to ensure that only the right kind of people would be able to talk to her. To the young Potter girl this was even more hurtful then the way her mother had looked at her when she said that she would stand on the side of the Covenant.

But this day was just the worst. She had been released from the hospital wing only a few moments ago, but the way through the corridors of the school was dreading for the girl. All her fellow Hogwarts students regarded her with looks that made her feel very uncomfortable. In the past most students simply chose to ignore her, but now...

The Slytherins regarded her with some curiosity, although they always started to sneer at her whenever she looked their way, just to keep up appearances. Most others though watched her with distrust since it became school wide knowledge that she was a member of the Covenant now. But what hurt her the most were those students that looked at her with utmost contempt and undisguised hate, most prominent among them her fellow housemates from Gryffindor. The Lions prided themselves to be the future leaders of the Light in the eternal struggle between light and dark; and seeing that one of their own house has joined a organization that Albus Dumbledore, the greatest of the light wizards, has identified as dark, was a betrayal that they would not let go unpunished.

As Rose slowly walked in the direction of the Great Hall for lunch, she kept her eyes on the ground, not daring to see what the students around her were doing whenever she passed them. This way she also missed that she walked right past another Covenant member among the Hogwarts students, one Cassiopeia Black. Only when Cassiopeia called out to her, Rose seemed to react.

"Still not fully awake, Rose?" Cassiopeia said in a friendly tone.

"I'm sorry... I ... my thoughts were somewhere else." Rose murmured somewhat dejectedly.

Cassiopeia was just about to say something else as a scathing remark from another student got her attention. "Now look there, two dark witches planing on how to destroy our world." Cassiopeia could only glare as she saw her brother and his cronies walking towards them with smug smirks on their faces.

"I always told you that Potter was a dark witch. That bitch should have been expelled years ago..." Ron Weasley growled from his position behind Antares. "But now that everyone sees the truth we should teach her a lesson that we will not let any dark bastards wander our school." He said as he regarded Rose with a deadly glare.

"Wow, you have always made a lot of effort to make everyone realize that your common sense is somewhat wacky, but now it seems you have totally lost it." Cassiopeia scathed as she stepped next to Rose, not willing to let those girl alone with her brother's bullying friends.

Ron was the first to draw his wand, but the other Gryffindors in his group followed him, all except Antares, who leveled a cold glare on his sister.

"This has nothing to do with you, Cassia. This is between us and the traitor... this time. Step back." He growled at his sister.

Cassiopeia did not even dignify his words with a response, instead she smirked evilly at him when she saw a few new arrivals. "Hasn't your master told you to be nice to Rose, Antares? This will definitely not help his cause to bind her to his side in the coming war."

Antares growled angrily as he heard Cassiopeia's words, he knew that Dumbledore wanted them to treat Rose better so she would not fall to the Covenant, but it was obvious that they would have to be more drastic with the ways they would show her that the dark will never win.

"You can't talk to those who have gone dark, Antares. The only language they understand is violence." Ron sneered, getting ready to cast spells at the two girls.

Antares only shook his head sadly as he saw his sisters resistance. "Father will be so disappointed that you have chosen this path, Cassia." With this he pulled out his wand as well, an action that Ron saw as his signal to attack.

But before he could even utter a single spell he was sent to the ground by a punch from the side. Antares looked in shock to his side as he saw Ron on the ground, his lip bleeding where the fist of his attacker had hit him.

"You are a bunch of cowards, you only bring shame on our house and our school with your actions. Your kind makes me sick." Antares was speechless when he saw that the sudden attacker was another Gryffindor, Cormac McLaggen, a usually arrogant fifth year student. This action from him was a complete shock to all other Gryffindors present at the moment.

Little did they know that Cormac was a Covenant member just like Rose. To him this action was just a chance to prove his worth to the Covenant, it was obvious to all that Alexander Grindelwald had some interest in the young Potter girl and helping her would certainly get Cormac into Alex good graces, even if he has to do some unorthodox things.

"What are you playing at, McLaggen? You are one of us, why do you help those dark bitches?" Ron growled from his place on the ground, a bad move on his part as it only got him a kick from Cormac that collided painfully with his abdomen.

The entire scene had already drawn much attention and many other students were standing at a safe distance to the fight, watching it with undisguised interest.

"Seven boys against two girls, what a heroic act. Godric Gryffindor would be so proud to know how his house follows the path of the light and righteousness. You are a shame to our house. And not just do you attack with such vastly superior numbers but you also do it against two girls, worse against one had Ms Black not been here to stand with Rose. Get your heads out of your asses and get your priorities right." Cormac yelled at the stumped Gryffindor boys. Some of them even had the decency to look ashamed of their actions.

"I advise you to leave." A cold voice stated from behind the Gryffindor group. There stood Benedikt with his group, all of them armed with their wands, ready to curse the foolish students should they really wish to start a fight.

"You have no place here, dark wizard. Take your lapdogs and get out of our school." Antares growled angrily, especially as he saw the small smile on his sister's face as she saw Benedikt.

"If I count right we are even now, seven of us and seven of you bigots." Benedikt said with a smirk, purposely omitting Cormac since the Gryffindor had not yet been exposed as a Covenant member.

"Just try, here at Hogwarts the dark will never win." Antares yelled at Benedikt in anger before he raised his wand and fired the first spell at Benedikt.

The young Russian easily evaded the spell, but did not fire back. Alerted by panicking students, a group of Aurors hurried into the hall, surrounding all of the quarreling students. First among the Aurors on the scene was James Potter, the man looked furiously at Benedikt and the other Covenant members present at the scene.

"What is going on here, what have you accursed dark wizards done this time?" He demanded from Benedikt, the young Russian looking utterly unimpressed by Potter's attempt to look menacing.

"Mr Potter, those dark bastards attacked us without provocation." Ron yelled out in anger, not daring to let the man know what they were about to do to his daughter.

"Sir, that is a lie. Those seven Gryffindor students were about to attack your daughter because they feel betrayed by her due to her affiliation with the Covenant." Cormac said in a respectful tone. Benedikt said nothing to the topic, instead he just glared at the Aurors that still had their wands solely directed at them.

"And you are?" James Potter asked with a stern tone, his gaze only briefly shifting to Cormac before he returned to watching the Durmstrang students.

"Cormac McLaggen, Gryffindor fifth year, sir. I came across this scene when those seven here tried to attack your daughter and Ms Black. Their actions bring shame to the house of Gryffindor and I cannot let them dishonor my house, so I acted accordingly. The Durmstrang students came shortly later, but did nothing so far except warning Mr Black to get lost." Cormac spoke in the most haughty tone he could employ, emphasizing his disgust at the actions of his fellow Gryffindors.

James was stumped, he would have suspected the foreign students to have started this, but apparently it wasn't them. At least if this McLaggen was telling the truth. But why should a Gryffindor lie about this. As far as James knew McLaggen wasn't one of the Covenant collaborators and his pride in his house seemed genuine.

"I thank you for your action Mr McLaggen. Do me a favor and escort my daughter to wing with the sleeping quarters of the teachers, I will meet you and Rose there once I have sorted out this... mess." James decided to believe McLaggen and Cormac did not waste any moment but placed a hand on Rose's shoulder and escorted her away without any resistance from the girl.

"You... students return to your ship, you are not welcome to frolic in the halls of Hogwarts." James said with a tense voice to the Durmstrang students.

Benedikt only snorted and spit before James' feet. "Wouldn't have wanted to linger here any longer anyways. The place reeks of bigots and idiots." With these words he turned around and left, followed by his fellow students and Cassiopeia who only glared at James Potter before she managed to catch up with Benedikt and walked silently next to him out of the school.

The Durmstrang students couldn't cover their smirks any longer once they had left the building. They could hear Auror Potter yell at the group of idiots that had tried to attack his daughter and judging by the volume of his voice he was not going to go easy on them. And to top it all Potter had sent Rose away with another Covenant member, believing that McLaggen is actually a faithful Gryffindor. This way they knew Rose was somewhat safe even though they could not bring her to the ship at the moment.

Cormac and Rose slowly walked down the corridors of Hogwarts in silence until they reached the wing of the school where usually only teachers were allowed. Seeing that they were alone, Rose finally spoke up.

"Thank you, Cormac... without you and the others... I don't even want to imagine what they would have done to me." Rose spoke with sadness in her voice. She was never really popular, especially among her own house, but the hate they now showed for her was... unsettling.

"Don't worry. Comrades do such things for each other." Cormac spoke, looking smug and proud of himself. Yes the Grindelwald heir would surely reward his efforts to keep Rose safe. And surely being on her good side would be worth even more. Maybe it could be his ticket to become a member of Alexander's inner council, friendship to a member surely got Cassiopeia in, or at least it looked like she was part of that group. "Say, Rose, would you like to be my date to the Yule Ball. That is of course if you haven't already gotten another one I mean."

Rose looked in shock at Cormac. She couldn't believe what he had just asked her. She had heard during her time in the hospital wing that she would need a date since she was a champion, but she had little hope that anyone would be willing to go with her.

"I...it would be m..my honor..." She stammered out somewhat perplexed. "But why? There must be countless better alternatives for you."

"Alternatives yes, better... well that depends on the point of view I guess. I don't really want you to be forced to go with one of the headmaster's little bigoted lapdogs and he surely won't protest me taking you to the ball since I am an honorable Gryffindor." Cormac

said self importantly. "And I do find you charming and pleasant enough company, we will surely enjoy ourselves together." He was not sure whether he had sounded as genuine as he had planned, but the small smile on Rose's face was a sure sign that she had believed him without further questioning his motives.

Usually Victor was composed and calm most of the time, or like Elena often put it he was brooding in some dark corner. But right now he was pacing around the deck of the Durmstrang ship, his golden egg on the floor. He tried glaring holes into the damned things for the hundredth time since he retrieved it from that dragon, but so far he was none the wiser what to do with it. He was not really in the mood to open it again, the last time he tried that Alex sent him out of the room because of the shrieking voices that the egg emitted. No he was outside, standing in the cold December air and tried to figure the damn thing out with no success what so ever.

When Benedikt returned with Cassiopeia and his group he watched the scene with amusement. He and Cassiopeia stayed outside to watch the Bulgarian stalk around the egg like a predator around his prey while the rest of his group went inside where it was decidedly warmer.

"Do you really think this will help you with your egg, Victor?" Benedikt asked with mirth in his voice. "I mean why should it react to you walking around it in circles, I am quite sure that it won't be intimidated by that action." His words caused Cassiopeia to giggle slightly, much to his own delight.

Victor only glared for a moment at Benedikt before he looked back at the egg, not dignifying the Russian's words with a reply. Instead he crouched down next to egg and pushed the small button again to open the egg. Immediately the shrieking sound blocked out nearly all other sounds on the deck, causing most other persons that were present at the moment to increase the distance to the Bulgarian and his golden menace.

"I can't shake the feeling that he does not like talking to me all that much." Benedikt said with a mock hurt look.

Cassiopeia place a hand on his arm in a comforting gesture, smiling slightly at Benedikt. "Don't let it hurt you too much, he has never even said a single word to me since I first met him. I would have

declared him to be mute wasn't it for Alex assurance that Victor can talk."

This caused Benedikt to laugh loudly, loud enough that even Victor could hear him despite his close proximity to the egg. He tried to concentrate on the sound, trying to figure out if it was some sort of language or the sound of the next deadly beast those British wizards had decided to unleash next to their school.

But all his musing did not get far when he heard someone yell at him. As he looked up he saw a very angry Veela stalking towards him, her wand already in her hand. Worrying for what she would do to him and in particular what he had done wrong now he raised his hands in an appeasing gesture, but Elena was not easily appeased. Instead she cast a blasting curse at the egg, tossing it over board into the lake.

"Hey!" Victor protested annoyed. "Just what is wrong with you? I need that damned egg and now it is sinking to the ground of this damn lake." He looked pissed as he looked at the water of the black lake, not even daring to guess if it was half as cold as it looked at the moment. "Now I have to retrieve it from this ice cold lake in the middle of December, thanks Ms Bad Temper."

"I warned you to never open that damned egg in my presence again or else I would toss it into the lake and you right after it." Elena snarled at him.

"Then why do you come out here when I try to figure out the clue? I already avoided all others and came outside despite these temperatures..." Victor looked angrily at Elena, but that seemed to only increase the Veela's anger at him.

"I came looking for you, just what the hell have you told my brother? I agreed to go to the ball with you as friends only and now I have to listen to him telling me that he is glad we have sorted out our differences."

"I just told him you agreed to go the ball with me, nothing else." Victor yelled right back at her, both trying to stare the other down.

"Benedikt I believe it is better we go now, I really don't fancy seeing Victor getting dismembered by Elena." Cassiopeia whispered before

she pulled Benedikt towards the door. Benedikt would have really liked to see how that argument between Elena and Victor would end, but he was more tempted to follow Cassiopeia at the moment.

They were barely through the door when they heard a loud splashing noise, followed by an angry looking Veela stalking past them towards the stairs down to the lower decks of the ship. Both Benedikt and Cassiopeia had to stifle their laughter until Elena had disappeared. They could easily guess what the Veela had done to Victor and the thought alone was very amusing.

"Well, can't say I didn't see that coming." Cassiopeia stated dryly.

"Yeah, Alex will laugh his ass off when he hears about it. Oh I can't wait to see what she will do to him at the ball when she has to spend the entire evening with him."

Cassiopeia looked thoughtful for a moment before she added her own opinion. "Well it is better when she maims Victor instead of that Beauxbatons champion, at least it won't cause an international incident."

Benedikt nodded to that with a small smirk. He would find either action very entertaining. "Ah, speaking of the ball... Ms Black, would you be willing to come to the ball as my date for the night?" He made a small bow, looking at her hopefully. There were proper procedures that had to be followed for such an invitation since they were both from old pure blood families.

"That would be lovely, Mr Kasakow. This would make the evening much more enjoyable." She smiled as Benedikt took her outstretched hand and placed a small kiss on her knuckles.

It was a clear night on this 15th December as Alexander walked along the shoreline of the lake. Much to his friend's and his fiancée's disapproval he had chosen to go alone, not really happy about the meeting that would take place only moments later.

For months he had no contact with the vampire matriarch Adrienne, not since he returned from his last negotiation with the wicked woman; and now, all of a sudden she sends him a message that she wants to meet him immediately. And at the borders of Hogwarts' wards of all places. The presence of this woman could cause a lot of

problems should she enter the wards and alert Dumbledore and his lapdogs to her presence.

He could feel the sudden absence of the oppressive wards of the school as he passed the borders. He allowed himself to relish the feeling, the knowledge that he could do whatever he wanted here without alerting anyone. The freedom to do whatever he wanted.

But the feeling did not last long, a dark figure separated herself from the darkness near him and he suddenly was face to face with the cold red eyes of the vampire matriarch. Adrienne had a look of anticipation on her face, her dark blond hair shimmering in the moonlight.

The vampire actually smirked at Alex, showing her fangs. "My my. Why that sour face? Are you not happy to see your ally?"

Alex frowned at her words in displeasure. "I don't recall that we were allies. You set a task for me that I have not fulfilled so far." He narrowed his eyes in suspicion as he saw her smirk widen. "Why are you here? Don't tell me you want to see if the wards of this school are strong enough to fry a vampire."

Adrienne gave him a cold, humorless laugh, showing off her fangs once more before she answered. "Ah, my poor little Alexander does not understand. I know you will fulfill my task eventually, so we are allies. You need us for your little war against the light."

"This will be no war between Dark and Light, Adrienne. This isn't one of your games either. Why are you here?"

Adrienne chuckled at that. "Impatient, are we? Yes your war isn't Light against Dark. It's Light against the all who don't believe Dumbledore's crap with the Dark waiting at the side lines for you to call for them." She started walking around him in circles, annoying him even more. "But my presence here, well lets just say I am here to help you with the task, so to speak."

"I don't need you help to condemn someone. I just haven't found the person who would deserve such a dark fate." Alex hand itched for his wand, he wouldn't put it past Adrienne to try and bite him, she had tried before, but failed every time during their initial negotiations.

"Oh don't be alarmed, Alexander. I am not here for your blood. As tempting as it is, I would rather have you give it to me ... willingly." She purred from behind him.

"Not gonna happen." Alex replied without a moments hesitation.

"You say that now, no one knows what the future might hold for us."

"Can you please get to the point of your visit? It is getting late and I have better things to do then chat with you in an area that might soon be swarmed by Dumbledore's lapdogs." Alex said with impatience dripping from every word.

"Yes, yes. You would much rather lie with your fiance, I know. Such a pretty girl she is. Her blood must taste divine when she is able to capture your heart so easily. She must be special..."

"Don't you even dare thinking about it, Adrienne." Alexander growled in anger.

Adrienne simply laughed in response, clearly showing that she was just toying around with him. "Don't your worry your pretty head about that, Alexander. As we are allies I won't harm any of those on our side." Her head suddenly snapped towards the shadow of a nearby tree, her eyes narrowed in suspicion. "But that does not include any outsiders."

Before Alex could get any meaning from her words, Adrienne charged towards the shadow with a murderous glint in her eyes. She grabbed somethings and threw it across the place, right in front of Alex feet. As Alex looked down at Adrienne's find he saw a black haired woman, clutching her throat where Adrienne had gripped her, a invisibility cloak lying a few feet away, discarded and useless to its former user now that she had been found out. Alex aimed his wand at the woman, anger evident in his face.

"You were careless, my dear Alexander." Adrienne said as she slowly walked back to him and their new captive. "To lead one of your enemies spies here without even realizing it. You have so much to learn about warfare before you are really ready to start one."

"Well I usually avoid meeting 'allies' in such an open place with no security." He spat back, not even once looking away from their captive. The woman looked back at him defiantly, but fear was underlying in her eyes. "Who are you? Why are you following me?" He asked angrily.

"Go to hell, dark scum." The woman said before she tried to grip a necklace around her neck. But before she could even reach it Adrienne had the woman's wrist in a fierce grip, nearly breaking it in the process.

"Such a bad girl. You really shouldn't talk to your betters like this. And what is this little toy, hm? A phoenix necklace, how cute. But where you are going, such toys won't do you any good." Adrienne mock scolded the woman like a little child before she used her other hand to first rip the necklace from the woman and throw it in the lake, before she searched the woman and disposed of her wand and a small dagger the same way.

"Probably one of the old fool's brainwashed idiots. Do with her what you want, Adrienne. But she mustn't report back to Dumbledore."

Adrienne smirked when she heard his words. "Of course, my Lord." She said with a mocking note to her voice. "I know just the right way to put this woman to use."

The woman looked at Adrienne with her eyes wide in fear as the vampire yanked her up and gripped her chin tightly. "Ah, still young and unspoiled, I will enjoy this."

Alex could only watch in morbid fascination as Adrienne plunged her fangs into the woman's neck and started draining her victim. There were only a few startled gasps from the woman before she sunk to the ground, unmoving, her neck smeared with her own blood.

Adrienne had just finished licking the last of her victim's blood from her lips as she started chuckling. "I knew it was worth coming here, this one's blood was excellent, I might keep her around."

"She ain't dead?" Alex asked annoyed.

"Not yet. Don't worry, Dumbledore will never see this one again unless he makes a trip to my coven." Adrienne grinned at Alex, showing one of her bloody fangs.

"Fine. That might be better than a bloodless corpse near Hogwarts. Now can we finally conclude this meeting, as I said I have better things to do."

"Of course, my Lord." She fumbled underneath her blouse, enjoying it when Alex decidedly looked anywhere but at her when she showed more of her skin in the process than he would have cared to see. Finally she took out a pendant, taking it off and handing it to the young wizard.

"I appreciate the sentiment, but I am not into wearing such fancy jewelry." Alex said as he inspected the pendant.

"It is not for you, Alexander." Adrienne said with a laugh. "Give this necklace to the girl you want to send to me, it will work as a portkey directly to a safe room at my coven. But be warned, I will not make an exception if one of your closer female companions takes this pendant, the first girl you send me will be my child as per our agreement."

"Thanks for the warning. I will go now... you have fun with your new... pet." Alex said after he had pocketed the pendant.

"We will meet again soon, young Grindelwald." With these words Adrienne grabbed the unconscious woman and disappeared back into the shadows, leaving Alexander alone at the shore of the lake.

"Hopefully not too soon, crazy woman." He said before he walked back to the ship.

The night of the Yule Ball approached quickly, but the weeks before were filled with more tense situations whenever Covenant members happened upon a group of Dumbledore's red tied bigots. To Alex the meeting with Adrienne and the rising problems to interact with all of their new Covenant members was steadily becoming a permanent headache. He had informed all of his friends and higher members of the Covenant about Adrienne and the meaning of the meeting, especially cautioning them to never touch Adrienne's pendant. At least this way he had no problem on that front.

But the inability to directly interact with most of the Hogwarts' Covenant members was a problem. They all knew this was Dumbledore's attempt to separate them, but they would not let it happen. Most had already been exposed, but those who were still unknown to Dumbledore tried to keep it that way, lest they would become direct targets of their enemies attempts to turn their entire school into light zealots. And this way they could gain much more intelligence on their enemies as well.

At least one thing had happened in their favor, due to Elena's involvement, Victor had finally solved the riddle that was the golden egg from the first task. Now with the knowledge what the next task would entail, they had a good chance to plan for it and all eventualities. The question was what kind of dangerous beast Dumbledore would unleash this time.

And now they had to attend the Yule Ball. All Durmstrang students would try to enjoy the evening and unwind a bit, at least as much as it is possible while you are surrounded by enemies on all sides. But with press and ministry officials present there would at least be no attempts from Dumbledore and his lapdogs, they would not dare act under such circumstances. Not with Fudge being so strangely obsessed with Alexander. The British Minister tried everything to remain in the good graces of the Grindelwald heir, believing he would keep everything peaceful this way and be remembered as a great political leader.

Elena was still standing in the outside hall with Victor and the other champions and their dates. All other guests had long entered the Great Hall, but the champions had to wait outside to make a grand entrance once the other guests were seated.

To Elena this put her self restraint to test, standing in the same room with her hated cousin. Fleur pointedly ignored Elena, a wise choice since the Veela would have taken even the slightest infraction as a reason to tear her cousin apart.

Victor knew how tense the situation was and how much it affected Elena, so he tried to keep her distracted as good as possible, inwardly yelling at those stupid British wizards to finally let them in before a real incident would occur here.

They had waited for nearly fifteen minutes before the deputy headmistress returned to their room to lead them into the Great Hall. Rose walked directly in front of Elena and Victor, her date Cormac McLaggen giving the senior Covenant members a almost imperceptible nod of respect. The knowledge that Rose would be escorted by a Covenant member was something that Alex appreciated, knowing that otherwise Dumbledore would have forced one of his lapdogs on her. But that the old man did not object Cormac was a good sign, apparently Dumbledore still believed him to be a true and loyal Gryffindor. A mistake that he would have to pay for one day.

As they entered the Hall, Victor was groaning a bit in annoyance. The hall was decorated in a strange mixture of muggle and magical decorations, but clearly emphasizing that this would be a celebration of the muggle holiday instead of the magical custom to celebrate Yule as the name of the ball indicated. He could already see all Covenant members leaving this place as soon as Dumbledore's lackeys would start singing Christmas carols.

As the champions followed the deputy headmistress they were greeted by applause from all other guests. Elena looked around searching for her brother and her friends, finally seeing them at a table near the one Dumbledore was waiting. But she knew as the date of a champion she would have to sit at the same table as the old goat and their High Master.

Elena couldn't help but scowl as she saw the way some of the male guests leered at her, but luckily most of them seemed more focused on her cousin, who made no move to restrain her Veela allure. Elena didn't know what irked her more, the Hogwarts students or her cousin.

Alex stood at his table, Lilith by his side, as he watched his sister enter the Hall. He couldn't help but smirk as he saw the scowl on her face. But he was glad that it was just a scowl and that she had not yet maimed her cousin. It had worried him quite a bit when they were told that the champions and their dates would have to wait outside for a while, meaning that Elena and Fleur would be in the same room with only very few people to stop them from attacking each other.

"I'm glad, Elena has kept her cool as it seems." Alex murmured towards Lilith.

"Don't believe it is over now, she still has to sit at the same table with her during dinner. Until then anything could happen." Lilith said with a smirk on her lips.

"Oh well, Victor will know what to do in that case. Unless there is a fight or any other major crises I will completely dedicate my attention to you this evening." He smiled coyly at her.

"You better be, this is our first date in the last three months. You better make this enjoyable for me."

Their little banter did not go unnoticed by their friends at their table, all watching those two with knowing eyes. "Your wish is my command, Lilith." Alex said before took her hand and placed a small kiss on her knuckles.

After they had all listened to Dumbledore's words it was finally time for the dinner, and much to Elena's frustration, smalltalk at the tables. And Dumbledore seemed almost completely fixated on her during that time, not talking to the red head that had replaced the fired Crouch as ministry official, nor with the champions at the table.

"Are you enjoying yourself tonight, Ms Grindelwald? You seem a bit tense." The old wizard said with a benevolent smile on his face, much to Elena's disgust.

"Not at all, headmaster." She strained the old mans title trough clenched teeth, not daring to look at her cousin, who sat only one seat away from her. "I would much rather dine with my brother and my friends instead of two of the people I despise the most in this world."

Most people at the table were genuinely taken aback by the venom in Elena's voice as she addressed Dumbledore. There was no need to ask who those two people were, Elena's hate for her cousin was known by everyone. And that the other person was Dumbledore himself was quite obvious.

Fleur was about to retort something, but was quickly silenced by Victor, who sat between her and Elena. "Don't even think about

commenting on that, I don't fancy getting your blood on my robes just because you thought it to be prudent to provoke Elena." This actually shut the French girl up, Fleur knew exactly that a fight against Elena should be last thing she would want for this evening.

"Ah Mr Krum, you surely overreact here. We are here as friends this fine evening. Surely there is no need for hostility." Dumbledore asked the young Bulgarian.

"I'm done here, the stench of falsehood and ignorance has spoiled my appetite." Without waiting for a reaction Elena stood up and left the table and the Hall, much to everyone's astonishment.

"Mr Krum, you need to find Ms Grindelwald, you are needed for the first dance..." Dumbledore said somewhat startled.

"I will look for her, but I advise you to do that dance without us. I doubt that she would want to come back here as long as certain antagonizing elements are still present." Victor said as he stood up.

"But it is tradition that all Champions have the first dance, surely you wouldn't want to..."

Victor interrupted him with a disgusted snort. "Since when are you concerned about traditions, headmaster? So far you and your brain dead lapdogs have done everything in your powers to destroy the culture and traditions of the magical world to accommodate your muggle believes." With one last glare he was gone, too.

The other people at the table were stumped, some looking questioning at Dumbledore for clarification what Victor had meant with his words, but the old wizard said nothing. He was too busy with keeping his own temper in check after being told off in such a public setting.

But Dumbledore was unwilling to let out any sign that the sudden departure of one champion and his date affected him at all, so he did the first thing that got to his mind and announced the end of the dinner and the begin of the dancing, with the champions being the first on the dance floor.

Alex had watched the Elena's departure with some worry, but he knew that she would not do anything rash, and even if she was

really planning to, Victor would be there to talk to her. He had different plans for now, as he was leading Lilith to the dance floor.

"Do you remember the first time we danced together?" Lilith asked him as they slowly danced to the song.

"How could I forget. We danced to escape the bickering old men at the Winter Ball." He said with a small smile. "And I distinctly remember that you didn't really like me all that much back then."

"And look at us now... I must have clearly lost my mind." Lilith remarked dryly as he pulled her a little closer than the current dance required.

"You loved me back then and you love me now. The only difference is that we now know that the feeling is mutual and act on it." Alex replied with a small chuckle.

"Well six years is quite some time to change your opinion."

"Do you regret it?" Alex asked her solemnly.

"Not one second of the last few years." She said before her lips met his in a short, chaste kiss. They were still on the dance floor and knew they couldn't do much more here, but the evening was not over yet, far from it.

Benedikt and Cassiopeia were dancing not far from the couple, watching them with some interest. "They are even closer here in public than they are on the ship." Benedikt said with a hint of amusement in his voice.

"If believe it is kind of romantic. Even here, surrounded by their enemies they can openly show their affection for each other. They won't let anything stand between them." Cassiopeia said with a dreamy smile.

"So you are a romanticist?" Benedikt asked curiously.

"Love and romance go hand in hand, Benedikt. I wouldn't wish it any other way for myself. Being born in a old pure blood family you surely understand that we sometimes have no say in who we marry,

just like Alex and Lilith. But despite even that they have fallen in love with each other and that is what makes it so romantic in my opinion."

"I shall keep that in mind for the future. But what would you say when your father would contract you to a man you already feel attracted to?" Benedikt asked with a smirk.

"You don't know my father all that well, Benedikt. He would never agree to a contract unless I already love the man involved."

"That is good to know, that means I am already on the road to success." Benedikt said.

"Road to success? What exactly do you mean?" Cassiopeia asked in mock confusion, knowing full well what he had implied.

"Just saying that I fully intend to finish what I have started." Benedikt said with a crooked smirk.

Cassiopeia simply chuckled at his expression before she let her gaze wander around. It soon fell on Rose and her date. The girl seemed to be quite happy being with him at the ball, something Cassiopeia was glad for. Rose did not have to return to the Gryffindor tower since her father had gotten the headmaster to agree for her to live in her fathers quarters; at least until the Gryffindors got their heads out of their asses. But she was still regarded with open hostility at any time she met most members of her house, while the rest of the school ignored her existence completely. Rose deserved some happy memories of this year and to Cassiopeia it was obvious that her only chance to get those would be in the presence of Covenant members.

But then she saw someone who was hellbent on ruining Rose's evening. One Ron Weasley had entered the Hall with a furious expression as he walked towards Rose and Cormac. But luckily he had to get through quite a number of people standing on the side lines of the dance floor, so Ron was delayed long enough to stop his actions. And Cassiopeia had seen just the two people she needed for that.

"Would you excuse me for a second, Benedikt? There is something I need to do." He was a bit confused why Cassiopeia wanted to end

the dance this early, but he did not protest and both returned to the side lines.

There Cassiopeia approached the hulking figures of Crabbe and Goyle, her cousins henchmen, who both stood there, watching their leader dance with his date.

"Vincent, Gregory, could I talk to you for one moment?" Cassiopeia asked with a friendly voice.

"Ah... Draco told us not to talk to you... I think." Vincent said somewhat suspicious.

"Don't let my foolish cousin dictate your lives like that." Cassiopeia admonished Vincent. "I have a request to the both of you. And let's just say I would owe you two a favor if you could help me out."

"And what would be that request?" Vincent asked, looking somewhat curious. Draco often treated them like dumb trolls, but even Gregory and Vincent knew that a favor from the young Black could be worth quite a lot.

"You see that red head idiot Weasley? He wants to ruin the evening for a friend of mine just because no girl would come as a date with him. Could you ... dispose of him for me? Just take him out of the Hall and stuff him in a broom cupboard or something like that. Could you do that for me, please?" Cassiopeia knew that those two boys were not all too happy with how they were treated by Draco and it was obvious that a small gesture like saying please would actually mean something to those two.

Vincent looked to Gregory and after seeing him nod, both boys walked towards Weasley, who still tried to find a way to get to the dance floor. Before the red head even knew what was happening, Crabbe and Goyle had grabbed his arms and pulled him out of the hall without anyone really noticing it. Even the yelling of the Gryffindor boy remained unnoticed due to the loud music. Cassiopeia watched the entrance to the hall where the three boys had disappeared until Gregory and Vincent returned a few moments later and nodded towards her before they returned to their places next to the dance floor.

"What was that about?" Benedikt asked as he came up next to Cassiopeia.

"Nothing really. Just asking help from my soon to be former housemates to take the trash out." She answered with a smirk. "Come, lets dance some more, I am in a really good mood right now and want to enjoy this evening." She needn't ask more, Benedikt quickly guided her back to the dance floor as soon as the next dance began.

In the decorated garden outside the castle Elena sat on a bench, trying to calm herself down. She knew that it would have ended badly if she had stayed inside. It was hard enough not to maim her foolish cousin, but Fleur and Dumbledore at the same table, that was beyond even her limits. She was glad she had left for she did not want to ruin the evening for her friends, who saw it as a rare chance to unwind. The only event when there were too many ministry officials and reporters present for Dumbledore to pull any weird stunts.

"Calmed down?" Victor asked as he approached the Veela. He was cautious. He did not fancy finding out whether she can kick him all the way into the lake from this place.

"Yeah... look, Victor, I'm sorry. I've probably ruined this evening for you." Elena looked a bit ashamed as she made her attempt of an apology.

Victor said nothing at first, he simply sat down next to her on the bench, enjoying the fresh air outside of the castle. Though they used many warming charms to make the garden, which they had decorated especially for this evening, somewhat pleasant despite the cold December air, it was still a bit chilling, especially after coming from the overheated Great Hall.

"Don't worry. I don't fancy such events anyway. They are kind of dull." Victor said with his usual stoic voice.

"Still... we were supposed to dance like the other champions, surely this will be bad for your reputation. I am sure there are quite a number of fan girls that want to hex me right now for leaving just like that."

Victor laughed when he heard that, a sad laugh since he knew it was probably true. "Well let them talk. And I doubt any of my fan girls can do you any serious harm."

"Still... sorry, Victor. I somehow can't think rationally when that bitch is anywhere near... else I would have been able to control myself better and we could have enjoyed the evening like we intended to."

Victor looked at her sternly, he really did not want her to apologize all evening. Her eyes were always directed to the ground, she didn't even want to look at him in her state of self incrimination. He sighed in frustration before he place a hand on her chin and tilted her head towards him, so she would look into his eyes. Her gray eyes seemed to shimmer in the pale light of this garden. "Believe me, I don't want you to apologize. I really prefer to be here with you, instead of inside there with so many people I can't stand."

Elena looked at him worriedly, not understanding what he really meant before Victor leaned forward to kiss her. But only mere centimeters from her face he was stopped by her hands on his shoulders, keeping him back.

"I'm sorry... Victor, but I don't feel that way for you." Again she looked away, feeling even more uncomfortable then before.

"I know." Victor said solemnly. "But it was worth a try. You are an exceptionally beautiful girl, you know that." He said with a hint of annoyance in his voice. Elena only snorted in response. "No really, I mean it. You have seen how those Hogwarts idiots looked at you. You are truly beautiful, whereas your bitch of a cousin needed her allure to draw any attention away from you."

"I never wanted to be just a beautiful face, I fight for my place in this world and thanks to Alexander I can prove what I really am. That those Brits would reduce me to nothing more then a beautiful girl they want to have for themselves... the though is disturbing and makes my disgust at this people even stronger."

Victor laughed at the thought of some stupid Brit trying to claim Elena. The thought seemed so utterly ridiculous and impossible, but he wouldn't put it past the Brits to think like that. To them Elena was just a dark creature with far less rights then a human.

After that both teens sat on the bench in silence, both trying to ignore Victor's earlier attempt to kiss Elena in favor of their mutual friendship. It was then that they heard the agitated discussion of two men, not far from their bench.

"Haven't you felt it? Seen it? The Mark is getting darker with every day. He is back and you know it. You must have felt it, the first painful tuck in the Mark, two years ago. He is back and he will kill us for our betrayal." The voice was obviously Karkaroff, Victor and Elena knew the man well enough to distinguish his voice anywhere. But who the other person was remained a mystery at that moment.

"Don't babble, Igor. We both knew this would happen eventually. I have done everything to ensure my own survival ever since I first felt the Mark returning to strength years ago." The other man sneered.

"You ... no I won't go back, I won't serve him again. I have allies, powerful allies that he would not dare to cross."

"You overestimate the young Grindelwald's power, Igor. Even he won't be able to protect you from the dark lords wrath. He is nothing but a boy playing around with politics. And even if he had the power to, I doubt he would do anything to keep you safe, he doesn't seem to like you all that much. So what will you do? Run away again?"

"I won't go back and I won't die. I survived before and I will do it again." With these words Igor left the other man alone and stalked back towards the castle. To his shock he passed Elena and Victor, both looking at him with narrowed eyes. He paled a bit when he saw them, this was not something he wanted them to know, but now the damage was done.

Shortly thereafter the other man walked past the two Durmstrang students, looking at them with undisguised contempt. He remained silent though, knowing full well that those two should not be crossed, not even Dumbledore could do much that would force those people to spare him.

"Looks like the Death Eaters are getting antsy. Maybe we should tell Alex to keep an eye on our esteemed High Master." Victor said with mirth in his voice.

"Yeah, we will do that tomorrow, no need to disturb his time with Lilith." Victor looked at her a bit oddly when she said the last part with a displeased tone.

Far away from the proceedings at Hogwarts, Ivanna sat with her mother in their ancestral home in the outskirts of Moscow. It was a quiet time for both Ivanna and her mother. Without Benedikt as the usual troublemaker who would bring some life into the cold rooms of the manor it was almost oppressively silent.

A house elf appeared in the room to notify his mistress about the arrival of a guest. Confused by who would come at this late hour, Ivanna's mother left the room, leaving Ivanna behind. Not that Ivanna would have noticed it as she was engrossed in a book she was reading. She loved reading, though her duties at Durmstrang had left her only very few moments to do it.

Moments later Ivanna's mother returned, looking pale and shaken. Ivanna looked up at her mother confused about what had caused this sudden change in her mood.

"Ivanna, my girl. I'm sorry... I didn't know he would come when only you are here with me..." This confused Ivanna even more. "Your father is here... he is waiting for you in his study... he made it clear that he will not allow any disobedience to go unpunished." Her mother looked close to tears as Ivanna stood up, her face contorted in anger. That her father would return home and dare threatening her and her mother... she would not let that slip. She wasn't the weak girl that Nestor Kasakow could kick around as he pleased.

"Don't worry. He will be gone in a few minutes." With this Ivanna left the room and her mother behind, not seeing her mother's tears as the woman feared for her daughter's welfare. She clearly remembered what Nestor had done the last time she dared to defy him. If it wasn't for Fedor's intervention, Nestor would have long killed Ivanna.

Ivanna entered her father's study without knocking or anything, facing the angry man with her own wand in hand. She would show him not to mess with her and her mother.

"I see that the years you have been consorting with that Grindelwald boy have done nothing to better your manners." Nestor Kasakow

scathed from his place on the chair behind his desk. His wand was lying on the desk, next to his hand, ready to curse her whenever he saw it fit.

"Why have you returned? My family does not need you, in fact you are a menace to all of us. Go back to where you came from."

"Don't you dare show me such disrespect. I am your father and I will be shown proper respect by my worthless daughter." He glared at her, taking his wand to teach her a lesson.

"I only show respect to people that deserve it. You are worse than scum, you deserve nothing." This did it, Ivanna could barely evade the first curse her father sent against her.

Ivanna quickly retaliated by blasting her father's desk to splinters, sending countless sharp splinters at Nestor. He yelled loudly when the splinters passed his magical shield and caused him many bleeding cuts. He had only shielded himself against his daughter's magical attacks, not expecting her to resort to such means of attack.

But Ivanna was not done yet, while her father was distracted she used her magic to collapse the nearby bookcases on him, trying to bury him underneath the shelves and books. Unfortunately he saw this action coming and quickly sent the bookcases flying in his daughter's direction. Ivanna nearly got crushed by the large shelves, but managed to drop to the ground before she would have been hit.

"Give it up, Ivanna. I will always be stronger than you can ever dream to be. You are nothing but a worthless girl. The best you could ever hope for in your life is to get a good husband to elevate your social standing." Nestor growled at his daughter.

"I am already more powerful than you can ever be, father. Both in social standing and in magic I have long surpassed you." With these words Ivanna sent a wave of curses and hexes to her father, crushing his shield and blowing him backwards against the wall.

But then Nestor did something Ivanna had expected the least of him. He laughed. He laughed at her even though she had just blasted him against a wall and clearly shown that she was more powerful than him.

"Have you finally lost the last of your mind? Are you finally completely mad?" Ivanna asked angrily.

"You have already lost and you don't even know it yet. When it comes to your life it will always be me to make decisions." He took a folded parchment from the inner pocket of his robe and threw it at her.

"What the hell is this?" Ivanna asked in confusion before she unfolded the parchment and read the title. 'Contract of Marriage...'. She had only read these words before she looked at him with utmost hate and contempt. "You have sold me to one of your fucking pure blood friends? Which sick fuck have you given me to... how dare you even think of doing such a thing to me."

Nestor only laughed again. "You now see that you are completely powerless against my decisions. The contract is signed and official. You have no other choice but to comply. The family of your future husband was most... eager to get you for this contract..." He chuckled again.

"Go to hell you bastard. Burn in hell and never come back." In a fit of rage she sent more curses at her father, but he had wisely used a portkey to escape his daughters wrath.

Ivanna was left alone in the destroyed remains of her father's study. Shaking in anger and the feeling of helplessness in her situation, the contract still clutched in her hand, before she sunk to her knees and wept. For years she had believed she was free of her fathers meddling, free to make her own decisions. But now everything came crashing down on her and no one could help her. Not Benedikt, not Alexander, no one. She was all on her own, forced into this mess by her father without a chance to escape.

A/N: Well so much for this chapter. As a side note, this chapter was the longest I have written so far with ~ 10,5k words.

Well I hope that this chapter did not disappoint, I really thought about how much I wanted to do with Yule Ball, but in the end I kept it basic, not really going into too much detail.

About the relationships shown in this chapter, I want to say that the only relationship that is decided is Alex/Lilith. I've taken some more

steps towards Benedikt/Cassiopeia, but other than these two all others are still open for you to guess.

I really hope that Adrienne was interesting in her first real appearance. She is only a minor character in this story, her role would be more important in the sequel to this story should I ever get enough time to write it once I have finished this story. For those few that want to know what kind of vampire she is, I really try to show them somewhat akin to the vampires from 'Vampire: The Masquerade'. In a story for V:tM she would be a Lasombra vampire, maybe I try to give her more traits of this clan in future scenes where she is involved.

Ah and the end with Nestor and Ivanna. I really hate being cruel to my own characters, but well every character has his own story and problems. This meddling from her father is her story with her struggle to become a strong and independent woman.

Enough for today, please leave a Review. I really love the feedback I have gotten so far and I am really grateful that I get so many Reviews even though most AU stories with OCs tend to struggle with little feedback no matter how good or bad the stories are. So keep on Reviewing, I really love you all for it as long as it isn't senseless flaming.

Chapter24: Resentment and Innocence

When Lilith woke up the morning after the Yule Ball she couldn't keep the smile from her face as the memory of the last evening came back to her. It had been so long since she and Alexander had some time to enjoy just being together. With the constant threat here at Hogwarts she had somehow feared that their relationship would suffer from the constant stress and duties. But far from it, they had become even closer, far closer then she had hoped to become before their planned wedding next year.

But still a feeling of discontentment spread through her as she saw that she was alone in their bed. She wished for him to be the first thing she saw each morning, to just see him lying there next to her, keeping her safe. But this morning he was gone and that irked her as she looked around, still slightly drowsy from sleep.

The feeling quickly dissipated as she heard him chuckling from the other side of the room.

"Good morning, love. I already thought you would sleep till lunch today." Alexander said from his place at the table in their room as he watched his fiancée with a smile on his lips.

"What do you mean? Is it already that late?" Lilith asked between two yawns as she stretched slightly, causing the blanket to fall off of her, much to Alexander's enjoyment. He couldn't help but chuckle again as his smile grew. "What?" Lilith asked slightly confused.

"Nothing, just enjoying seeing my lovely fiancée. How do you feel this morning?" He asked with an almost innocent expression as she realized what he meant with his words.

"Sore..." Lilith said with a small whine as she stood up. "But so content and happy like I've never felt before." She slowly walked over to him and hugged him from behind, resting her head on his shoulder.

"So you don't regret it?"

"No... why should I. We'll be married next year anyways." She replied with contentment humming in her words. "Do you...?" She asked almost tentatively.

"No. There is nothing I would ever regret concerning you, Lilith. But I can imagine what our parents would say." He said with a laugh.

"They are such prudes, it's not like they haven't done it before." She let go of him and sat down on his lap instead, leaning against him much to his obvious enjoyment, though he sighed after a few moments.

"If you keep this up I doubt that we will leave our room today, Lilith. And as much as I hate to admit it, we are both needed and cannot simply disappear for a day or two." Alex sighed again and Lilith pouted a bit in disappointment. "So, why don't you freshen up and get dressed while I get a house elf to bring us breakfast."

Lilith stood up slowly and walked towards their bathroom, swaying her hips a bit more than necessary, much to Alex obvious delight. "You can be a real minx when you want to, you know that?" Alex asked her as he watched his fiancée impudently.

She did not answer him, but simply blew him a kiss before she disappeared in the bathroom and shut the door behind herself. For a short moment Alex contemplated following her, but he knew that this would cause them to stay in the bathroom much longer than they had time to spare at the moment.

Moments later someone knocked on the door of Alex and Lilith's room, much to Alex dismay. He really did not want to answer the door just now and he was tempted to just remain seated, waiting for Lilith to come out of the bathroom.

"Alex, I know you are still in there, get up I need to talk to you." Alex sighed as he heard the voice of his sister. He knew that whenever Elena believed something is important enough to come to his room and possibly wake him in the morning that it had to be something significant.

He slowly walked towards the door and opened it a bit to see his sister frowning at him. "Yes, what can I do for you, Elena?"

She did not immediately answer but instead shoved past him into the room. "You won't believe what Victor and I overheard last

evening in the garden outside the castle..." She started but stopped when she saw Alex annoyed face. "What?"

"Nothing, but is it really necessary that you come here this early on a free day to my room?"

"Yes it is. The two pet Death Eaters, our little Igor and the old goat's dungeon bat had a rather lively discussion. Apparently their dark marks have started to act up. They fear that the terrorist they once served might be back and is about to call his minions. They both have enough reason to fear that since they more or less betrayed the other Death Eaters after Voldemort's downfall." Elena said hastily, the urgency in her voice making Alex ponder this even more than usual.

"Great, the last thing we need is that terrorist prancing around. Things will be stressful enough without him. Just imagine what would happen when that maniac tries to use the upcoming war for his personal plans." Alex started pacing around, thinking about how to use these less than favorable news.

Meanwhile Elena looked around the room, her eyebrows rising as she saw the discarded clothes and underwear on the ground and the ruffled bedsheets. She heard the sounds of the shower from the bathroom, realizing that her brother and Lilith could not be out of bed for very long. She looked around some more, her curiosity spiked, but Alex forced her to refocus on him as he issued orders for her to relay to the others.

"We must be vigilant now. Tell Benedikt to have Igor shadowed wherever he goes. If he tries to make a run for it then he is to be treated as a traitor to our cause. Unfortunately we cannot watch Snape without making the goat suspicious." He was silent for a moment, a contemplative look on his face. "Have our Covenant members from Hogwarts keep their eyes and ears open for any information from the Death Eater children in their school. We cannot and will not let this get in our way. If Voldemort is back then we will have to keep him contained on this sodding island. He mustn't pester our operations on the continent."

Elena nodded to his orders, feeling safe in the knowledge that Alex would find a way to keep that terrorist out of their way.

"Anything else, Alex?" She asked.

"Not now. I will have to plan... make some inquiries and so on. Blast that stupid wizard and his timing." He seemed angry for a moment, but his anger quickly dissipated when he heard the shower in the bathroom stop and a soft humming could be heard from Lilith. "Go now, Lilith and I will have breakfast in our room. We will talk later about other precautions against the Death Eaters."

Elena looked at her brother with a raised eyebrow before she left the room, leaving her obvious questions unasked. Alex was actually glad for that, his intimate relationship with Lilith was something that he did not want to share with anyone else at this moment.

Lilith stepped out of the bath only moments after Elena had left the room. A good thing thought Alex since Lilith wore nothing but her underwear as she approached her fiancé, still drying her hair with a towel.

"Who was that right now?" Lilith asked with a hint of annoyance in her voice.

"Just Elena. She couldn't wait to bring me freshest bad news of the day." He approached Lilith and took her into his arms before he kissed her passionately. "But that can wait for now, let us have a nice and quiet breakfast before we let this day go to hell." She was about to object, curious to know what exactly Elena had told Alex, but just being here with him made her sort of forget about that for the moment to enjoy her sparse alone time with her fiancé.

As Elena returned to the main mess hall she couldn't help herself but smile slightly about how flustered her brother seemed when he saw her looking around in his room. That strange smile did not stay unnoticed for long as both Benedikt and Victor looked at her oddly, not used to seeing the Veela smile at all. Ever since they had come to Hogwarts the usual expression they got from her was either indifference or a frown.

"Whatever made you happy, I want some, too." Benedikt said with a crooked grin as Elena sat down next to Victor.

Elena gave him one cold look, causing Benedikt's grin to disappear almost instantaneously. "Very funny, Benedikt. Really I can't contain my laughter." She said sarcastically.

"But he has a point, why so happy all of a sudden?" Victor asked before he took a sip from his coffee.

"Oh, I believe my brother and future sister in law have finally lost the last bit of their innocence." She said with a laugh, causing Benedikt to grin even wider and Victor to nearly choke on his drink.

"Good for them, I've told Alex for ages that sex is the best way to get rid of stress and enjoy the nights to the fullest." Benedikt said with a wistful smile.

"Not all of us a changing partners like underwear just like you do most of the time, Benedikt." Victor said with a frown.

"Hey, I am seriously offended by that statement. Just because most of you like to live like prudes does not mean that my tendencies are wrong." Benedikt glared at Victor, though the Bulgarian seemed completely unfazed by it. "And I have plans to be with only one girl from now on." He stated smugly.

"You better do, I have not doubts that Cassiopeia would castrate you, should you do something behind her back." Elena stated with casual indifference, making it sound like a commonly known fact.

"Don't worry. There is no other like her. She is the only one for me."

"Yeah right." Victor snorted disbelievingly. "Not to sound like the spoilsport I am, but I am more interested in what Alex had to say about the news you brought him." Victor said with barely disguised annoyance. He had no wish to talk about other peoples relationships, he wasn't a gossiping girl and he really did not like that topic after last nights disaster with Elena. He does not like to be reminded of his own failures.

"Right." Elena drawled before she told Benedikt and Victor about Alex's orders. Both listened intently to what Elena told them, knowing that fast actions would be crucial now, before another enemy could establish himself. Dumbledore and light bigots were more then enough trouble for them at the moment.

The old year had come to an end and with the beginning of 1995 a new year with many life changing events had begun. The festivities at Hogwarts were kept at a bare minimum, after the Yule Ball the cold war between Dumbledore and the Covenant had resumed without any sign of improvement. Both sides knew that this year the escalation of the conflict would be inevitable.

For Albus Dumbledore the trouble already begun early this year. No later then the 4th January the ICW would meet to discuss the accusations against his person and the general outcry to oust him from his position as Supreme Mugwump. Of course he couldn't allow that to happen, in his humble opinion Europe was dependent on him, lest the dark would take over and destroy their society.

At the moment the old wizard sat in his office with his deputy, discussing the plans for the next day when he would be absent for the conference of the ICW. He did not like to leave the school at such crucial times, remembering that after his last absence a large group of his students had defected to the Covenant, but he needed to go, else he would loose his position as Supreme Mugwump no matter what.

"And do not hesitate to send me an owl whenever something dangerous happens. I don't trust the Covenant to sit still when I am not around."

"Do not worry, I will ask the Aurors to keep them under constant surveillance. Nothing will happen. You go and get your political problems settled." Minerva replied evenly.

Despite her reassurance Albus couldn't help but frown. "Be careful. We still do not know what happened to Hestia, she has disappeared weeks ago and we don't have a clue where she is." He sighed sadly. "I fear for the worst. Maybe they have brought her to their ship and use her for their dark arts training or worse..."

"Or maybe she has just better things to do then fulfill your orders, she is an Auror after all. She has a job to do. The accusations you just uttered could cause this whole situation to escalate and I somehow doubt that they would be stupid enough to keep her hostage on their ship." Minerva said somewhat reserved. She

despised the Covenant, but she would not believe them to be capable of such things, they were still students after all.

"I hope you are right. I will leave after dinner today, they start the conference early tomorrow morning. I can't say how long I will be gone, but hopefully I can resolve this ridiculous business quickly so we can focus on the real threat." Albus said confidently.

Conrad walked quietly through the long halls of the Belgian Ministry for Magic, where this conference of the International Confederation of Wizards would take place. He was on his way to meet up with Minister Falkenstein and representatives of other countries that would help them get rid of Dumbledore for good this day. To him it was a fact that there was no way for the old man to escape justice, not after what he had done.

His son and many other students had given them enough proof to destroy Dumbledore's public standing once and for all. Oh how he had waited for this day. Ever since the obnoxious old wizard had appeared at their home and threatened to take their son, his wife Selene had feared for her child. They all knew that the man posed a very real threat and that was what scared Selene so much about him. But Conrad would not let such a thing happen. He loved his wife too much to let anyone scare her like that and get away unpunished.

"Ah Conrad, good you are finally here. Things are about to start soon." The German Minister for Magic, Heinrich Falkenstein, greeted his old friend merrily. All of them anticipated this day.

"Let us bring this to an end, I am really sick of listening to Dumbledore's endless speeches about the Light and why we should all follow his examples. Getting rid of that man will be a service to all of magical Europe, if not the whole world." Conrad said as he sat down in the chair next to the minister.

From their loge they could see the entire room, the few places down in front of the stage already filled with reporters and other spectators, while all representatives lounged in their separate boxes, out of immediate sight of the reporters.

"Ah, it begins." Heinrich frowned with what he saw next. "I still can't believe it was the Brits turn to lead the conference. Bad luck on that I guess."

"Not necessarily. It might work in our favor. Fudge greatly dislikes Dumbledore and is more than fascinated with my son." Conrad said with a smirk.

Down on the stage Cornelius Fudge, Britain's Minister, walked onto the stage with a self assured gait. He was about to lead a meeting of the most influential and powerful politicians in the world and if everything went well the ICW would also help him dispose of a man that has undermined his government for years.

After he had cast a Sonorus charm on himself Fudge mustered all his confidence and spoke up. "My dear friends and colleagues, I welcome you to the first conference of the International Confederation of Wizards in the year 1995. This is a special meeting concerning accusations against the current head of the ICW, Supreme Mugwump Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore. These accusations and the motion to replace the head of this governing body has been forwarded by the German Ministry and will be brought forward by the representative Conrad Jaeger of the German Ministry." With that Fudge motioned towards the loge with the banner of the German Ministry.

Albus Dumbledore looked up, seeing Conrad stand up from his place next to his minister, stepping forward. The man looked far too smug for Albus liking and he knew he would need to take him down a peg or two during this meeting. For all he knew the man was a kidnapper who had stolen the greatest weapon of the Light, a crime that Albus would make the man pay for.

Conrad stood in front of Heinrich, visible for anyone in the room as he got ready to speak. "Honored members of this august body, I know the wish for this conference came sudden, but the situation is dire and the crimes committed by Mr Dumbledore warrants his immediate dismissal as Supreme Mugwump." Conrad took a deep breath as he saw what happened around him. Murmurs could be heard from all around him, people talking in hushed voices, hidden in the shadows of their loges.

"As almost everyone here knows this year there is a special event held at the magical school Hogwarts, the very school that Mr Dumbledore is headmaster of. During this event a selected group of students from all participating schools. But already during the selection of those participants Mr Dumbledore allowed the first threat to the safety of the students entrusted to him to happen. Though it was stated as a rule that only students in their sixth or seventh year would be allowed to compete, a young girl, one Rose Lilian Potter was entered into this contest against her will and forced to compete despite her being only a fourth year student with mediocre education."

"Objection!" Dumbledore yelled from his place on the stage. "I did what I could, I specifically placed an age line around the magical cup that was supposed to select the champions, but someone tricked the cup to enter the girl. I can not be held accountable for that. Also I could not act against the girl's participation, after she had been chosen a magical contract had been formed that forces her to participate." Dumbledore actually glared at Conrad from his position, something that disconcerted many people that only knew him as the ever jovial grandfatherly man.

"Yet you knew that this girl would be severely outclassed and her life would be in constant danger, yet you allowed the organizers to bring four fully grown dragons to your school. Nesting mothers no less. Among them a vicious Hungarian Horntail that the dragon handlers warned you about as it was extremely dangerous and nearly impossible to control. Against any better judgment you brought them to a school full of children. You allowed these beasts near the students during that task with little to no protection for the students what so ever. You did nothing to keep the students safe." Conrad raged on, all other people in the room deadly silent, even Dumbledore resolved to listen and think of a counter strategy instead of throwing around accusations in anger.

"Worse yet you allowed that the youngest and most vulnerable of the champions to be forced to compete against that Horntail, knowing that there was no way for the girl to prevail against that dragon. And when the beast nearly killed the young girl you did nothing, you refused to help the girl as she was in mortal peril. When finally someone interfered you even tried to meddle with that. But even despite your interference, the valorous students of Durmstrang

saved the young girl, slaying the dragon in the process. But your actions, Mr Dumbledore, nearly cost many of the Durmstrang students their lives. You cut them off from any help and hadn't it been for the Auror captain's early arrival, the other Aurors at the scene would have made it impossible for anyone to aid those who defended your student. The Aurors later stated that they had acted on your direct orders." Conrad paused for a short moment, waiting for the implications to sink in a bit before he continued with his accusations.

"Honored members of this august body, I ask you are these the actions of a man who knows what is good and right? Are these the actions of a man that we should allow to preside over this institution?" Conrad looked around seeing the reporters and spectators glare angrily at Dumbledore, while the other representatives remained in the shadows of their loges.

"I say no. This man has shown his ineptitude to even maintain order at the school he leads as headmaster. He has obviously failed in his duties towards his students and his guests, risking their lives without second thought. Such a man cannot and should not be allowed to be in any position of power, this time no one has died, but seeing his actions I truly fear for our all safety in the future if he remains in a position of power. Whether his actions are to be seen as a sign of his old age influencing his common sense or as a willful act is for this body to decide. Combined with his past infractions there is only one way of action. I clearly call for a vote to remove Albus Dumbledore from his position as Supreme Mugwump because of his recent transgressions." With this Conrad fell silent, waiting for any reaction. And he did not have to wait for long, Dumbledore jumped right back into action after being awfully silent during most of Conrad's speech.

"I must severely disclaim your accusations, Mr Jaeger. None of this has been willful and most of it was not even my fault in the first place. I had no word in the choosing of the tasks, the decision to bring dragons was made by former Ministry employee Bartemius Crouch, who has already been removed from his offices for his actions."

"Yet as the headmaster it was your prerogative to deny them the right to bring dangerous beasts to your school." Conrad said miffed.

"I had not been informed which dragons would be brought for the task, I did not know of the Horntail until the day of the first task."

"So you claim ignorance? Isn't that even worse? You allow them to bring beasts to your school without checking which and what danger they would present to your school and students." Conrad stated angrily.

"I had been assured that the dragons would not pose a threat by dragon handlers that came with the dragons. And I had no hand in the choosing which champion would face which dragon. That young Ms Potter had to face the Horntail was simply bad luck, but in no way planned by me or any other official of the Tournament." Dumbledore claimed while he tried to keep up an impassive face. "Ms Potter faced her dragon under the same requirements as the other three champions did with theirs. That she got hurt was a known risk for this task, but at no point was she in any danger of dieing."

"But even when you saw her struggle, getting severely hurt and attempting to flee there was no motion from you or any official to end the task even though it was clearly over."

"As I said the girl was in no danger and nearly out of the ring before the Durmstrang students jumped into the ring to confront the dragon in a foolhardy attempt to claim fame for killing the vicious beast. Their actions enraged the Horntail and made it impossible for the dragon handlers to interfere. All that I could do was stopping any other students from risking their lives in this foolish endeavor. As a fact it was your sons doing that caused the escalation of this, Mr Jaeger."

"So you claim it was the responsibility of someone else? Even though we have the testimonies of the dragon handlers that they had warned you and the other officials before the task that the Horntail was too dangerous." Conrad shook his head. "And pray tell me who was responsible for the barrier and the Aurors that made it nearly impossible for anyone to help the fighting students? Was that my sons doing as well?"

"In my opinion this is a ploy, an attempt to discredit me. Your son is responsible for what happened, at least partially responsible. And here you are accusing me, trying to remove me from positions of

power. Considering that I am your strongest opposition in this conference, I clearly see the pattern." Dumbledore accused.

"This is an outrage. Trying to avert the attention from your deeds by accusing someone else of such underhanded methods? You clearly have no shame or honor." Heinrich shot up from his seat, standing next to Conrad as he looked down on Dumbledore. This action of an official representative caused many murmurs from the other loges.

"You stand here, next to your friend, Minister Falkenstein, but you don't even know the full truth about the dark secrets this man hides. The fact that he is a criminal that does anything to further his own agenda has never even crossed your mind." This accusation caused an uproar among the representatives, though before any more commotion could start, Fudge tried to calm the people down by banging his gavel.

"Silence!" Fudge yelled in his desperate attempt to calm the room down. "Mr Dumbledore, I must reproach you to abstain from such accusations if you cannot even prove them." Fudge said angrily as he looked at the old wizard.

"This isn't a mere accusation. I am here to justify myself for actions beyond my control and accusations from the true criminal in this room. Conrad Jaeger is nothing but a dangerous criminal, any meticulous inspection will give you undeniable proof of that." Dumbledore answered hotly.

"And on what fact do you base your accusation? What gives you idea to accuse this man of wrongdoings when there has never been any reason to investigate him?" Fudge asked annoyed.

"The abduction of Harry James Potter in 1981." Dumbledore claimed loudly, causing pandemonium in the room.

At Hogwarts meanwhile other trouble was approaching quickly. Fleur Delacour had been called to the current office of her headmistress inside the Beauxbatons carriage. She did not know why Madame Maxime wished to see her, but the moment she entered the office the sight caused her a very bad premonition.

"Ah, Fleur my dear, you are finally here."

Fleur looked disbelievingly at the woman that sat near her headmistress before she answered. "Mother, what are you doing here?" She then saw the young girl hiding behind her mother. "And why is Gabrielle with you?"

"Fleur, my child. I am here to finally settle the problems within our family and talk to your cousin. I cannot live with the knowledge that the all that remains of my sister in this world keeps on hating us. I couldn't overcome the quarrel with your aunt, but at least I hope to get Elena to cease her hostility towards us." Apolline Delacour looked at her daughter with a sad expression.

Fleur only narrowed her eyes in obvious displeasure. "You shouldn't try that. The girl is crazy I tell you. She hates us with a passion and is completely unapproachable. And that Grindelwald she calls her brother now does not make it any better. She is just as dark as her mother had been. You only waste your time and put yourself in needless danger."

"I have to try at least. I allowed the fight with Brigitte to get out of hand and I regret it to this day that I never really made any move towards reconciliation. If it means accepting her involvement with the Grindelwald family to get Elena to talk and listen to me then I will do that."

"You don't listen to what I am telling you. She is completely out of her mind, she loathes the sight of us and she will simply attack you before you can say a single word. I beg you to reconsider, this will lead to nothing but hurt and fighting." Fleur looked pleadingly at her mother, but it was no use.

"That foolish man Dumbledore said the same and kept me from coming here for months. But now he is not here and I will use this chance to talk to your cousin, it may be the only chance I ever get. Please understand what it means to me, Elena is a lot like her mother and as long as she keeps on hating me things will never get better for me. I... I want our family to be whole again... whole for the first time in decades. Even your grandmother wishes for the same, but she cannot come due to her age..."

"Mother..." Fleur couldn't bring herself to object further, seeing the hurt look on her mothers face.

"Brigitte made a terrible mistake once when she followed that maniac, but Elena is not yet lost. Things are different and can still be changed if I only try hard enough. Don't fear for me, my child. Olympe and two of your father's Aurors will escort me to make sure nothing bad will happen though I doubt I will need them. You please stay here and keep an eye on your sister."

Apolline stood up from her chair and hugged her daughter before she and Madame Maxime left the office to approach the Durmstrang ship. Fleur could only hope that her mother was right and that Elena would show less aggression towards her aunt than she had shown towards her cousin. Fleur's little sister Gabrielle though remained in the office looking expectantly at her older sister with curious eyes.

Alerted to the approach of the French group, Alex and Benedikt stood on deck of the ship, watching the four persons warily. They only knew that one of these persons was the headmistress of Beauxbatons, it was pretty hard to not recognize the woman, but the other three were unknown to them. Seeing the headmistress Alex first thought was that the six students of the French delegation that had joined the Covenant by now had been exposed and that Maxime had come to complain about that or something like that, but just in case he had ordered Elena to stay away from the approaching group, so she remained in the mess hall with Victor, Lilith and Cassiopeia, all three trying to keep the Veela calm and out of sight.

The French group stopped at the shore line, not yet daring to get any closer to the ship as they saw nearly two dozen people watch them from the ship. It was well known what those students were capable of since they had slain the dragon so the French dared not anger them by getting any closer just yet.

Alex and Benedikt approached them with a few others following them, their eyes never leaving the French, their hands never far from their wands just in case things would get messy.

"Greetings, headmistress Maxime. Why is it that you come to see us here?" Alex said somewhat cordially, though he could not keep the distrustful look from his face.

"Good day to you, Mr Grindelwald." The giant woman said with a stern voice. It was obvious that she did not like to be here and talk to

the Grindelwald heir. She had her own assumptions about the boy before she arrived at Hogwarts and meeting him and his Covenant had done nothing to make her think any good things about the boy. "Our business today is not with you, but with your... sister."

Alex sighed when he heard that. "Whatever your students have claimed this time, Elena has stayed away from any Beauxbatons students here at Hogwarts for weeks now. Whatever you wish to accuse her of, I will not let you harm her or try to do anything harmful later on." Alex said in annoyance.

Apolline looked at the boy curiously. The concern for Elena's safety was genuine, she could easily see that and it somewhat soothed her to know that her niece apparently truly meant something to him. She had worried for some time that the boy might have claimed and bound her to himself with some of those barbaric laws that were common in some countries. She would have done anything to get her daughter away from him if that was the case, but apparently her worry had been unjustified.

"We are not here to accuse her of anything..."

"Then why are you in the presence of two Aurors if I might ask? Don't try to fool me, madame, or else you might learn that I do not take kindly to such acts." Alex said with undiminished annoyance.

"This is Apolline Delacour, Elena's aunt. She merely wishes to speak with her niece to solve the issues within their family." Maxime said with a sigh.

Alex demeanor darkened when he heard that. "Elena does not wish to talk to any of her so called family. You Delacours have caused her enough emotional scars. She has no need for you people and I will not let you hurt her. Leave now!" Alex growled, the other Durmstrang students behind him tensing up as they gripped their wands.

"What do you know about our family? Yes there have been issues in the past, but they must be resolved. I don't want to make the same mistake with her that I did with her mother. We are family and that will never change. This fighting has gone for too long already."

"Yes, I don't know the entire story. I only know what Elena told me and I would never force her to tell me the rest since it causes her pain to simply think about it all. All I know is that you have shunned her part of the family and riled up Elena's grandmother against her own child." Alex spat at Apolline, much to the woman's shock.

"Brigitte was at fault, she caused the contempt that our mother felt for her when she joined that madman. It was her fall to the darkness that caused the split in the family. But Elena has never done any such thing, she was never shunned nor hated by anyone in the family. I want her to realize that. Please, let me talk to her, I truly wish her no harm. But this issue must be resolved before it causes unnecessary bloodshed." Apolline implored the young wizard before her.

"Blaming it all on my mother again, are you? You despicable woman. It was all your doing. Because of you my mother was abandoned with her grief after my father's death. Because of you she was all alone with two young girls, not knowing what her future would bring. You caused her fall into the dark abyss that she would never be able to escape from." Elena spat at her aunt as she quickly approached the group at the shore, closely followed by her watchers who looked annoyed that the Veela had escaped them so easily.

"Elena..." Apolline exclaimed breathlessly as she saw her niece for the first time in nearly a decade. The girl looked so much like her mother, but her face, contorted with rage, worried Apolline greatly. No she couldn't let her niece follow Brigitte's dark example. "I don't know what your mother has told you, but please let us go somewhere more private to talk about all the misunderstandings that have caused our family such pain in the past." She looked pleadingly at her niece, but Elena was completely unaffected by that.

"Don't you dare blaming my mother for this... and this is the right place for the truth about your oh so perfect family. It is time that the people see what kind of abominable people you Delacours are."

"Elena, calm down. You are getting too worked up because of this." Alex turned around to his sister and placed a hand on her shoulder as he looked in her eyes with concern. "They are not worth such anger, we have talked about this before. Calm down." He knew that he had to act and calm his sister, or else she would soon start trying to tear her aunt to shreds.

"I want to, Alex, really, but just being near that... woman makes me so angry. Her being her and acting as if it was my mothers fault..." Elena said with a muted voice.

"Elena, we did not even know that your father had died until almost a year after the accident. We were never told about it and only heard it when some acquaintance of your mother accused us of the same thing you accuse me of now. She had distanced herself from us before... she was upset with our mother for years before that."

"Upset? UPSET? Of course she was upset. She was more then upset. You destroyed her family, you destroyed her parents marriage. If you had never been born all of this would have never happened."

"It all only worsened because we never talked about things, about our troubles. She has tried to accept me, but I always acted aloof because I thought her initial coldness towards me was caused by her arrogance. Had we talked about it..."

"Enough. Spare me your sob stories. You forced my mother down that dark path. Because of you she joined that freak though all other Veela stayed away... it was all your fault. We had no one... and the only time I ever had the displeasure of meeting you I was treated like an outcast at the house of my own grandmother by you and that bitch you call your daughter..."

"Elena... please listen to me..." Apolline pleaded again, but to no avail.

"Be glad that my brother is here to keep me sane, lest I would have long torn you apart. Leave now... never come back. The next time I have to see your face I will not hesitate to kill you." With these words Elena turned around and walked away along the shoreline, not yet willing to return to the ship and face the looks of her fellow Covenant members.

Alex did not follow her, but Victor quickly hurried after the Veela to keep an eye on her should anyone try to attack her. Hogwarts was just too dangerous for any Covenant member to be left alone even though Victor knew that Elena needed some time alone to sort out her thoughts. Alex though could only shake his head sadly. He did

not like to see Elena hurting, but this incident once more had shown him that behind the strong mask of the girl he had come to love as a sister was in truth a fragile child, hurt and disturbed by her painful past with her family. He really wanted to hate the Delacours for this, but seeing the crushed look on Apolline's face he couldn't help but pity the woman. Apparently this fight in her family caused this woman just as much hurt as it did for Elena.

Back at the ICW conference Fudge had finally managed to get the room to calm down again after Dumbledore's insane accusation against Conrad Jaeger. The implications of what the old wizard had just claimed were so much more severe than anyone could fathom at the moment.

"I stand by my point. This is an outrage. It is common knowledge that Mr Dumbledore has attempted many times to get his hand on the scion of the Grindelwald family, even going as far as appearing at a private party with armed vigilantes demanding that the family hand over their son to him because he believes that he is the only one who knows how to raise the heir of Gellert Grindelwald. This is just another ludicrous attempt of this man to rob the family of their son by claiming he is the son of his zealously loyal lapdogs." Heinrich Falkenstein raged loudly, while Conrad stood next to him, shocked that Dumbledore seemed to have found out their best kept secret.

"This is neither a game nor a lie, but the undeniable truth. I demand a thorough investigation of this, it will give the proof needed so the boy can return to his real family." Dumbledore stated haughtily from his place on the stage. He smirked inwardly, happy that this has caused such a commotion, surely this would draw the attention away from his own misgivings. He knew this game called politics and the only way to escape a scandal was to cause an even bigger scandal that would draw all attention.

"Silence." Fudge yelled again. "This meeting is not about Alexander Grindelwald or Harry Potter, but about your misgivings, Mr Dumbledore. I will not have you turn this meeting away from the real problem at hand." Dumbledore could only glare at Fudge, he and the minister never really got along, but to see Fudge act against him here... he would have to see the man removed from the position as minister, he was far too susceptible to dark influences as it seemed.

"I call for an immediate vote to remove Albus Dumbledore from the position as Supreme Mugwump." Heinrich called out, earning many approving murmurs from the other loges.

"Yes, that is the best for now." Fudge conceded.

"Wait. I call for an additional vote to investigate the Grindelwald family to uncover this terrible secret, the truth about the disappearance of Harry Potter nearly fourteen years ago." Dumbledore demanded loudly. Even if he was stripped of this position he would have to at least damage the Grindelwald's reputation with the truth about their dark plans getting revealed.

"Fine, but be silent now, Mr Dumbledore. Your time to speak is over." Fudge growled annoyed. "All in favor of conduction such an investigation please vote now."

Fudge looked around seeing several members of the ICW raising their arms out of the shadows of their loges, showing their compliance.

"In favor of such an investigation, forty two out of sixty nine votes. An investigation will be initiated, but should the investigation proof your accusations to be false you will have to face charges for slander and deception of this governing body, Mr Dumbledore." Fudge looked sternly at Dumbledore, not really happy with the outcome of this vote. The situation in Europe was tense enough as it is, but if the old fool was indeed right this would cause a scandal big enough to incite war and no one could stop it this time from happening.

Conrad looked quite displeased by this outcome. He was sure that nothing would be found that would implicate any connection with the disappearance of Harry Potter, even if they would check the his sons heritage they would only see the Grindelwalds as Alexander's family. But snooping politicians could unwittingly stumble upon their constant connection to the old Grindelwald, Gellert Grindelwald's escape from Nurmengard was impossible for now. Well at least that was something positive in Conrad's opinion.

"We now move to the vote for the removal of Albus Dumbledore from his position as Supreme Mugwump. All members in favor of the motion, please raise your hand." Fudge said cordially. "Sixty two out

of sixty nine votes in favor of the motion. Albus Dumbledore, you are hereby removed from the post of Supreme Mugwump, all your privileges and duties coming with this position are hereby revoked. You have clearly shown that you are unable to fulfill your duties as they are required of you. This concludes today's meeting, we will reconvene at a later date to vote for a new Supreme Mugwump. All persons that wish to apply for this position have to announce their candidature within one month of this meeting. Good day, ladies and gentlemen." With a bang of his gavel Fudge ended the meeting of the ICW with a gleeful smirk. This decision today would surely give him the necessary backing to get Dumbledore removed from his position in the Wizengamot as well. Yes he would finally be rid of the meddling old man.

Dumbledore himself seemed unaffected by his dismissal. He had anticipated this outcome and though he was angry that his enemies had succeeded with their plan he made no sign to show anyone how he truly felt. To the press and other people he only showed the mask of the disappointed grandfather.

Fleur heaved a relieved sigh as she saw her mother and the headmistress return seemingly unharmed. But when she saw her mother more closely she could see the hurt look on her face. Whatever had happened, it had caused her mother much pain. Not physical but emotional. Whatever her hellish cousin had done to her mother, it made Fleur even angrier with Elena than she already was. In her rising anger Fleur had not even realized that one short little seven year old was missing from the room she was in. She would only find out later, searching for the small girl with great worry.

Elena was sitting at the shore of the lake, seemingly alone, trying to quell her tears and the hurtful memories of her past. She was thankful that her brother had not followed her, that he would give her the time she needed to come to terms with these things by herself. She was also aware that Victor wasn't far away, watching over her from the shadows without intruding upon her privacy. For some moments she could let go of her feelings in a way that she usually tried to suppress as good as possible. She would never show such weakness in public, she was known as a strong woman and she was needed to be seen as such. These feelings, this show of weakness was something that only few had seen before. The only one in the last few years who had seen this side of her was Alex as he learned about her family problems for the first time. He had not

judged or treated her different because of it, something she was forever grateful for. And now it was probably Victor who saw this side of her, but it didn't bother her, she knew he would respect her privacy and keep this to himself.

Victor was leaning against a tree at some distance from Elena, hiding himself in the shadows of the forest. He could hear her sobs even though he was at such a distance from her. For a moment he was tempted to go over to her and try to comfort her in some way. But he did not really know what to do in such a situation to help and he knew that if Alex did not follow her after this that she wanted to be as alone as possible in this dangerous environment.

He marveled as he saw this side of the usually strong, nearly untouchable Veela. For months he had seen her either angry or stressed, always shielding herself from everyone and everything except her brother. But this side, even though this vulnerability seemed so uncharacteristic for Elena he couldn't help but feel that without her mask she was even more enthralling than usual.

He shook that thought out of his mind. The debacle at the Yule Ball made it clear for him that she was not interested in him, that she was not looking for love or anything beyond friendship. But he wondered if that was just a part of her mask. He knew how emotionally attached she was to her brother, that it was likely that she had shown him this side of her before. Maybe he just had to reach beyond her strong, indifferent mask. He couldn't help but snort at that thought. She would maim him if she even suspected him of any impure intentions.

He was shaken out of his musings as he saw someone approach Elena, he stiffened for a moment, his wand in his hand to defend the girl if necessary, but when he got a clearer view of the unwanted company he relaxed a bit. Apparently it was only a small girl. But that made him even more suspicious. What was such a small girl doing here? By the looks she was much too young to be a student. Having some suspicions about this girl he slowly approached Elena and the young girl, always trying to keep himself hidden in the shadows with the help of some charms.

Elena had not yet realized that Victor wasn't the only person watching her. She was too distracted with her memories to notice much around her as suddenly someone spoke right next to her.

"Why are you crying?"

A bit startled Elena looked at the source of the question, seeing a young blond girl looking at her with big eyes. The girl looked so innocent with her seemingly worried expression.

"I... I was just reminded of things I would have rather forgotten... painful memories are the worst..." Elena couldn't help but laugh, this young child would most likely not really understand what she meant.

"Grandmother once told me when I had a nightmare that dreams and memories can only hurt us if we let them." The girl said cheerfully.

Elena laughed slightly, wiping away the last errant tears. "Your grandmother is a wise person." Elena said with a pained expression. She never really had a chance to interact with her own grandmother. The few times she met the old Veela were always marked by her mother arguing with her grandmother until she came and took her and Marie with her as she left angrily. Being taunted about that by her cousin Fleur did not help there in the slightest.

The girl nodded happily as she heard Elena's words. "Grandmother is the best. But she always seemed sad when she was with all of her family." The girl said sadly.

Elena smiled at the small girl. "Maybe she also has some painful memories and can't stop them from hurting without help." She really had no idea why she was talking with this girl about this topic when it caused her pain and the feeling of loss herself. But somehow the girl radiated such innocence that it simply drew her in.

"Tell me, child, who are you?" Elena finally asked as she realized that she didn't even know whose child she was talking to.

"My name is Gabrielle, Gabrielle Delacour." The girl said with a bright smile.

Elena looked dumbfounded at the girl. Gabrielle Delacour? Her aunt had another daughter? She did not even know that, she only knew about Fleur... She then realized the similarities between the girl and how she remembered Fleur when she was about that age. Moments

later she realized that she had talked to the girl in her native tongue, she had not spoke French very often in the past few years, but now she had slipped back into using that language without even realizing it.

She then looked at Gabrielle again, seeing the girls confused look as she could not understand why Elena reacted like that to her name. Elena couldn't help but feel a pang of anger and jealousy at this young girl. The girl's grandmother Elena had complimented only moments ago... that was her grandmother as well. This girl had what she had missed out on... Elena looked intently at young Gabrielle, she really wanted to hate the girl, just like she hated the girl's sister and mother, but she couldn't. She just couldn't do it. This little girl had nothing to do with her own painful past. Hell the girl most likely wasn't even born when the worst of it happened, how could she lay blame on her.

"I am Elena. Elena Grindelwald." She said finally, seeing the girls face lit up with another smile.

"You are that girl my mother talks about so often." Gabrielle exclaimed loudly. "Are you really my cousin?"

Elena took a deep breath, she hated admitting that fact to herself, but she didn't want to lie to this girl. Gabrielle might as well be the only part of her old family that she did not resent so she didn't want to give the girl a reason to hate her. "Yes..." She answered slowly. "We are cousins. But your family and mine never really got along."

"Why? If we are family why don't they get along." The girl asked innocently, not really knowing why this question caused Elena so much grief.

"That is complicated. It is just that our families cannot really interact all that much... because of unresolved problems from the past."

"Then resolve them. Then we could see each other more often." The girl exclaimed like it was the easiest thing in the world.

Elena shook her head sadly. "I fear that is impossible. Some things just cannot be resolved. I have lost my old family irrevocably, but I have found a new family that accepts me the way I am." Elena smiled wistfully as she thought about Alex and his... their parents.

They really did so much for her, accepted her, treated her like she was of their own blood. And she always felt awkward when she was with them even though it was what she wished for the most. Once they were back home she would have to show them how much she appreciated all they had done for her.

"But you said we are family, too." Gabrielle said with a pout, causing Elena to laugh slightly when she saw the adorable behavior of the young girl.

"We are, but the rest of your family... and I don't along. We only fight and cause each other hurt..."

"But mother always seems to miss you when she talks about you."

Elena felt another pang of guilt, had Apolline be truthful? Did she really... No, no. She would not indulge such thoughts. She hated the Delacours for all they had done to her... well all of them but Gabrielle.

"It is just something that can never be." Elena said with a tone of finality, not willing to discuss this any further. Not that she would have had a chance to do that anyways.

"GABRIELLE!" Someone had yelled from a position not far from them. Elena narrowed her eyes in anger as she saw her other cousin approach with a wand in her hand and a furious expression on her face. "Get the hell away from my little sister you dark bitch. I won't let you corrupt her."

"Big words from a worthless hussy." Elena answered angrily, her wand trained on Fleur. It was only moments later that Victor appeared from beside her, dropping a disillusion charm to make himself visible, his wand already directed at the Beauxbatons champion.

"Even to much of a coward to face me alone, you worthless bitch?" Fleur asked teasingly, her voice a mere hiss. "Gabrielle come here, you mustn't get near her or any of her kind. Those Durmstrang students are dangerous dark people that only live to fight and destroy."

Gabrielle hesitated for a moment, looking back and forth between her sister and her cousin, not understanding why they were so

hostile towards each other. She then cautiously stepped back from both of them, neither going closer to Elena nor Fleur.

"This has nothing to do with cowardice, Delacour. This is something that people like you will never experience. True friendship, people that will have your back no matter what." Victor spat at Fleur.

"I don't know what you have done to upset my mother this much, Grindelwald, but I will make you pay for that." Fleur growled with all the hate she could muster.

"Oh yeah, come and try you worthless waste of air." Elena said tauntingly. "Victor, stay out of this. It is time that I show this bitch how worthless she is."

Victor looked unwilling to let Elena face this alone, but he knew her strength and conviction. And that she would not forgive him if he would deny her the chance to maim her arrogant cousin. But on the other hand he knew that Alex would want him to avoid confrontation at all cost, it would escalate too many things if one of those two cousins died in a duel. In the end he resolved to interfere only to stop death of either cousin, though he knew that Elena would hate him for some time if he stopped her from killing Fleur.

Both Fleur and Elena started circling around each other, their eyes fixated on their opponent unblinking. Both waiting for the other to make the first move, the first mistake. In the end it was Elena who lost her cool first and threw a series of curses against her cousin, which Fleur simply sidestepped before she retaliated.

Elena rolled to the side to escape her cousin's attack, shooting blasting spells at her cousin, which missed Fleur by some inches, much to the girls amusement.

"You are all talk, but no talent. A worthless whore that has sold herself out to the next best dark wizard." Fleur said with loathing. But Elena merely smirked at Fleur, what disconcerted the French girl.

Moments later a snapping sound could be heard behind Fleur, she looked over her shoulder for one short moment, seeing that Elena's spells may not have hit her, but they had hit a tree behind her, causing it to drop in her directions, forcing her to save herself with a

jump. But this gave Elena a short advantage, a moment of unawareness Elena could exploit.

As Fleur was still trying to get up from the ground a blasting curse hit her hard in the abdomen, sending her flying a bit before she hit the hard, frozen ground. Fleur had to roll to the side to escape Elena's consecutive cutting curses before she jumped to her feet.

But Fleur was not beaten yet, in her anger she partially transformed, her features shifting to the more bird like nature of her Veela heritage. Empowered in this unrestrained form she charged at Elena, fire blazing her hands as she created fireballs to throw at her opponent.

Unwilling to let herself be outdone by a mere part Veela, Elena created a strong shield to block the fire, but as Fleur was close enough she hit her cousin with her claws, leaving deep bleeding gashes on Elena's arms.

Seeing herself at a disadvantage in close combat without transforming herself, Elena tried to increase the distance between them by blasting Fleur back with a series of spells, knocking the French girl against another tree, but Fleur just stood back up, ignoring the pain.

Elena cursed, knowing exactly what was happening to Fleur. She had qualms transforming, knowing full well that once she was in her bestial form her instincts would dominate over the mind. But Fleur apparently did not know that, the beast in her taking over, ignoring everything but the enemy.

Elena had to stop Fleur, return her to her human state, else she would either be forced to transform herself or lose the fight, neither of those options would be acceptable. So she went through a series of intricate wand movements, charming the roots of the trees to break out of the soil, slinging around Fleur's ankles while she charged towards Elena.

Another wand movement later Fleur screamed in pain as Elena used a spell to cancel animagus transformations to forcibly return Fleur to her human state. It worked, though Fleur was still unwilling to give up. Instead she gripped her wand that was lying near her to

cut the roots that bound her to the ground before she sent another cutting curse at her cousin.

"You just won't admit your defeat, bitch." Elena growled angrily. "In that case I will have to inflict greater damage to you to end this farce."

With her eyes narrowed Elena created a fireball of her own in her free hand, getting ready to burn her Fleur until the girl couldn't move without immeasurable pain. Fleur reacted in kind, creating another fireball to attack Elena.

Both girls moved towards each other to increase their chances to hit each other before they threw their fireballs. But to their shock it was that moment that someone stepped in between them in a desperate attempt to stop them.

"No, stop this." Gabrielle cried out as she tried to end the fight between her sister and her cousin. Before she had been petrified by the fight, but after seeing her sister and Elena looking at each other with the apparent intent to kill the other, she tried desperately to put an end to this.

Elena was barely able to move her arm in a different direction, sending her fireball into a nearby tree, setting it on fire. But Fleur could no longer react, the fireball had long left her hand and impacted with her sisters back much to the horror of everyone present.

"GABRIELLE!" Fleur cried out before she ran over to her sister as the girl fell limply to the ground. The fight was forgotten in that moment.

Elena, too, raced over to the fallen girl, closely followed by Victor. To Elena this end of their fight came as a complete shock. She had not wished any harm upon her youngest cousin. Of all the Delacours Gabrielle was the only family member that Elena did not wish such a fate upon.

Fleur was kneeling on the ground, cradling her sister in her arms as Gabrielle opened her eyes. "Sister... why?" Was all the girl was able to say before she lost consciousness again.

"Get away you brain dead firebug. You only make her wound worse by holding her like that." Elena said as she pushed Fleur away, taking Gabrielle from her arms, turning her around so she could access the little girls wounded backside. Fleur did not even resist, completely in shock due to her sisters words.

Elena tried the best she could do to heal the burn wound on Gabrielle's back with the knowledge she had of basic healing, But she knew it wouldn't be enough, it would only do to stabilize the girl enough to bring her to a real healer.

"Fleur." Elena said exasperated. But the French girl did not react. "Fleur!" Elena repeated with more vehemence. Again no reaction, only when Victor shook Fleur violently the girl showed a reaction.

"You have to bring your sister to the hospital wing in the school. Victor and I cannot do it, they don't let us anywhere near there. Do you understand what I am telling you? If you value your sister's life you bring her there quickly." Fleur nodded and immediately picked up the small girl. "I healed her as good as I can, but she needs to see a healer asap. If I hear that you did not hurry I will kill you, do you understand?" Elena growled the last part angrily. "Our fights isn't over, only postponed. Now get your bony ass away from here."

Fleur said nothing, instead she simply hurried away with her sister in her arms. She was to shocked to speak, but she understood that time was of the essence right now, so she speed up her steps to run as fast as possible with Gabrielle in her arms.

"Let's return to the ship. This will have ugly consequences when that bitch decides to blame us for what happened to her sister." Victor said gruffly. "We need to inform Alex and the others. And we need someone to have a look at your wounds as well." Elena just nodded as Victor draped his arm around her shoulders, careful not to touch any wounds, as he guided the visible shaken and exhausted Veela back to the Durmstrang ship.

AN: Yeah, I know this was probably not one of my best chapters. No Ivanna, no Rose and almost nothing about Cassiopeia. But I really wanted to have the ICW conference in this and well the rest is almost entirely about Elena this time. It has been long since I had furthered her personal story and this chapter revealed a bit more

about why Elena hates the Delacour family. Next chapter I will probably reveal the complete story from Elena's point of view.

Well the beginning of the chapter... I know this entire first time after some big ball is somewhat cliché, but I did this entirely on purpose to underline that despite all that happens around them, despite all the things they do the main characters are still teens, 16-17 years old and they are still confronted with some of the things teens experience.

I truly hope the ICW scenes were not too boring, politics tend to be very boring. But hey old Dumbles got ousted at least that is a good thing.

Ah and the scene with Gabrielle. I used Gabrielle's canon age of 7 years, it fits very well for this purpose. Through the eyes of a child everything looks different, much easier. I never really wanted Elena to be spiteful and hating towards this young child so wait for what the future brings for her relationship to her youngest cousin.

Oh well and you don't need to say it, I suck at describing fights. I can analyze tactics and break it down in patterns but I cannot describe it to make it all great and exciting, but I try to improve with time.

Well that leaves 4 chapters for this story if everything goes as planned. Don't fear that I will rush the story, I have stated several times that there will be a sequel. This is merely the road to war, everything beyond will be part of the next story I will write for this AU. But whether I post it here on FF or not depends on my readers. The flamers behaved well the last few weeks so chances are good that I will finish the saga of the Grindelwald heir here on FF.

I will definitely post a short companion piece for this story with the next update, a story about how Gellert Grindelwald and Selene's mother, Lorraine Rivet, have met. It's not complete yet, but whenever I have the time I will write such short companion pieces to give this AU a more detailed background.

That is it. Please leave a Review with your opinion and I will try to find enough time to finish the next chapter quickly.

The Crimson Vanguard

Chapter25: Wrath and Silence

It was deadly silent in the hospital wing of Hogwarts as Fleur Delacour sat next to the bed of her sleeping sister. Luckily the burn wounds on the young girls back were far less serious then she and Elena had feared at first, but they would leave scars none the less. Scars that would for ever remind the young girl of the attack from her own sister.

The school matron Madam Pomfrey had also healed Fleur's numerous wounds from her brief fight against Elena, a fight that had shown Fleur just how powerful her hated cousin really was. Hadn't it been for Gabrielle's interference and subsequent injury, Fleur was sure Elena would have beaten her in this fight. Just thinking about it made her angry beyond reasoning, but right now all her anger vanished just by looking at her sister. It disappeared in the chocking feeling of guilt, Gabrielle was here because she couldn't control herself, that much was obvious to Fleur.

She loathed herself for hurting her sister, but again her anger refocused on Elena. Why had she been with Gabrielle? What lies had she already told Gabrielle to corrupt the poor little girl? This wouldn't have happened if Elena had kept her distance from Gabrielle and Fleur swore to herself that she would not let Elena anywhere near her sister ever again.

Suddenly the doors flew open and Fleur's mother entered the hospital wing, closely followed by her father. Louis Delacour was an imposing man. The recently elected French Minister for Magic was known as a man who was fiercely loyal, to his country, to his friends, but most importantly to his family. When his family needed him he would never hesitate to come. And so he wasted not one moment after his wife had informed him of the injury of their youngest child.

"Fleur!" Louis called out to his oldest daughter, seeing her next to a bed, looking sadly at her sister. She looked at him, but said nothing. She felt unable to say anything to her father, not after she had hurt her own sister. "Oh my dear child, I knew from the beginning that allowing you to come here was the wrong decision. This terrible place with all those violent foreigners..." He shook his head with a stern expression.

Awakened from the sounds, Gabrielle started to stir and opened her eyes tentatively. The first thing she saw was her mother hovering over her, quickly embracing her with relieved tears in her eyes. "Oh my little angel, I'm so glad you are alive."

Gabrielle said nothing but looked around when her mother finally let go of her. Gabrielle saw Madam Pomfrey sorting a cabinet on the other side of the room, giving the family some privacy without letting her patient get out of her sight. Then she saw her father, his face stoic, but relief evident in his eyes as he stood next to her mother.

"You have given us quite a scare, Gabrielle. Running away, getting hurt..." His face darkened after that. "It was that awful girl, wasn't it? That despicable Grindelwald that was once your cousin." He shook his fist angrily.

At this Gabrielle looked to the other side of the bed where her sister was still sitting in a chair, listening silently with a guilty expression on her face. As Fleur's and Gabrielle's eyes met the young girl shuddered in fear as she remembered the furious look on Fleur's face moments before she was hit by the fireball. All else she remembered was pain... pain caused by her own sister...

As her father saw Gabrielle shudder he believed it was caused by him mentioning Elena; he totally missed the look on Fleur's face. "Don't worry my little angel, that Grindelwald girl will never hurt you again, I promise."

"But..." Gabrielle tried to say, but she was interrupted by her father.

"Hush, don't fear. I will have that dangerous girl behind bars before the day's end." He said confidently, though the underlying anger in his voice was palpable.

"But she didn't hurt me!" Gabrielle protested loudly with a distressed voice.

"Gabrielle, my poor innocent angel. You don't need to defend that evil girl, she is no family of ours and will never be again. I was wrong to think I could save her from her mother's path..." Apolline said sadly as she embraced her daughter again in an attempt to calm her.

"That is enough stress for now. I must ask you to leave my patient to rest for now. You can cuddle her as much as you want once she has been released." Madam Pomfrey had walked over to them to shoo the concerned parents out of the hospital wing to allow Gabrielle to rest up.

Gabrielle's parents left only grudgingly, but in the end they acceded that it was better for Gabrielle to rest after such an experience. Fleur, too, stood up, walking away quietly. She had not said a single word and she had no plans to contradict her father despite knowing it was her fault. But when she looked back to her sister and saw the fear in her eyes when their eyes met; it was like someone had ran a dagger through her heart. Her own sister feared her now... and it was all Elena's fault. This only intensified Fleur's own hatred for her cousin.

Alex paced restlessly in the room after Elena and Victor had told him about what had happened earlier while Lilith healed the cuts and bruises Elena had received during the fight, since Elena was too exhausted from her fight to heal the wounds herself. Most Covenant members were here at the moment, but not a single word was spoken while Alex contemplated their position. He knew this would only increase the trouble they already had here, but they would prevail, he was certain they would, he had that much trust in his friends and followers.

"There you go. The claw mark on the shoulder will most likely leave some faint scars, but the rest was easy to heal." Lilith said with a soft, friendly tone to the girl that would soon be her sister in law.

"Thank you, Lilith." Elena replied with a small smile, though the smile was more forced than genuine. To her there was no reason to smile at the moment. "I'll just have to leave a mark on that bitch that will leave an equally permanent scar. Though I would prefer it to be on her stupid face."

"Elena, just let it go. This hate will get you killed one day." Alex admonished her with a frown.

Elena only huffed miffed. "Like that bitch could ever kill me. She is foolish and careless, going as far as nearly killing her little sister just to get an advantage. I'll put her in her place sooner or later."

Alex narrowed his eyes angrily. "This feud has already cost you too much, let it rest. Hate them if you want to, but don't start fights here at Hogwarts. If you can't adhere to that rule, I will have to send you back to Durmstrang, do I make myself clear?" At the end he raised his voice, nearly yelling. Elena just mumbled something incoherently. "What was that?" He asked hotly.

"Yes... I won't start fights... but I didn't even start this time. It was that bitch attacking all of the sudden."

"You told me as much. I don't want to yell at you, I am worried about you, please understand that." He placed a hand on his sister's shoulder, squeezing it comfortingly. "This fight will cause us much trouble. It doesn't matter who has started it, in the end they will blame you. They don't care for the truth, they only care for what Delacour says because she is their oh so beloved angel and you are the evil Grindelwald girl. Here in Britain we will never have justice unless we enforce it." He sighed worriedly. "But it is not time for war yet. We are not ready."

"But they won't wait until we are ready. Dumbledore wants you and he will not stop until he has you under his control and the Covenant has been destroyed." Benedikt said firmly. "I say we retaliate in kind whenever they antagonize us." His words were met with some approval from other Covenant members that were fed up with the way they were treated by their host school.

"We will not enter the spiral of hatred and death, Benedikt. Let them destroy themselves with only hate and destruction on their minds. We will act, but we will use our brains and defeat them on our own terms. I don't want any of you all to die needlessly." Alex said firmly, looking around into the faces of all present Covenant members, Durmstrang and foreign members alike.

"And what do you propose we do then? To me it is clear that they want violence." Victor interjected. "I have seen the unrestrained hate in Delacour's eyes when she attacked Elena. And we all have seen that most Hogwarts students are brain dead morons that act on their leader's orders without any second guessing."

"First we must find a way to possibly retreat from here." Alex then saw Victor's annoyed look. "And yes I know you are in a magically binding contract, at least according to Dumbledore. That whole thing

stinks if you ask me, so I've written a letter to my father, asking him to possibly investigate whether there is a way out of this for you. We will leave no one behind when we have to go, don't worry."

"Fine. I would really prefer to leave, this entire Tournament went to hell with the first task. I don't even want to think about what kind of horrors they unleash during the second. And I don't like this whole 'Taking what you will sorely miss' thing that the clue told me about. Them taking something from me? Only over my dead body I say."

"Yeah, they already ruined the Tournament. Guess this will be the last Triwizard Tournament ever held. A pity considering that Dumbledore succeeded in destroying another tradition. But back to topic. Once we have secured a way out, we will have use the situation here to our advantage and do as much damage to our enemies reputation and support as we can. Fighting and killing won't do us any good unless it happens in self defense..."

Suddenly the door of the room flew open and a troubled looking Auror entered. "Lord Grindelwald, the French have returned, this time with an even bigger group of Aurors. Apparently they are lead by the French Minister himself." The man said breathlessly.

"Great." Alex said sarcastically. "Everyone up on the deck and keep your hand on your wands. Elena, you stay on deck, don't go near them. I will talk to that French idiot." This time Elena nodded without rebuke, knowing how serious the situation was for her.

"Wait, didn't the French just vote for a new Minister?" Lilith asked suspiciously. Both Alex and Elena nodded, knowing full well who was the most important French politician at the moment.

"Louis Delacour, the bitch's father is Minister now and apparently he already misuses his new power to have Aurors interfere with a family feud." Elena said angrily.

"Come now, time to face them. Everyone, be careful."

"Now listen you, I don't care who you are or believe to be, but you won't enter this ship. If you try to force your way through us this will be seen as an act of war against all nations that this ship represents at the moment." One of the German Aurors spat at Louis Delacour as the man demanded entrance.

"That would be enough, Edgar. I'll take it from here." Alex said as he slowly approached the large group of French, flanked by Benedikt and Victor while Lilith stayed behind with Elena.

"As you wish, Lord Grindelwald." The Auror knew what effect it would have on the French when he called Alex by the title the Covenant members only used in jest. Oh yes he could easily see all of them stiffen. By the looks none of them had lived during Gellert Grindelwald's campaign, but they surely have grown up with stories about the terrors the man had wrought.

"Why are you here, Minister Delacour? You are aware that you are treading on a fine line between peace and war with what you are doing."

"I am here to personally arrest the criminal that has attacked and hurt both my daughters." The man declared hotly as he glared at Alex. "I am here to arrest Elena Grindelwald for assault against Fleur and Gabrielle Delacour as well as to question her about her involvement in the death's of Brigitte and Marie Dupont. The girl is a dangerous criminal and will be treated as such."

"Just try, Delacour, and you will have a war that will leave nothing of your country. Your accusations are laughable and if you believe that I will hand over my sister to you then you are even dumber than Dumbledore in his believes that I would be willing to become his lapdog." Alex said with a derogatory laugh. "There were only four people present during the last fight and at least two of them can provide you with the memories of the fight, showing that your bitch of a daughter was the one who assaulted my sister. I am sure it wouldn't be good for your career to start to start with false accusations and charges for slandering my sister. I don't know why your oldest daughter lies about the incident, no wait, I actually can think about at least half a dozen reasons including her obvious hate of my sister."

When he heard that, Delacour narrowed his eyes in aggravation. But he couldn't help but look worried when he heard that they could prove that Fleur was the one who started the fight. Would she really lie?

"And not to forget it was your daughter's own fireball that hurt little Gabrielle. Maybe you should teach her how to properly use her sparse Veela powers without hurting others. And for the other times, there have been no fights so far, only verbal spats that were caused by mutual hatred. So take your little fellows there and crawl back to Paris where you belong." Alex said with a cold voice as he tried to stare down the older man.

"This does not change anything. You could have made up this as a ploy to buy your sister time to escape justice. I will arrest her now for questioning."

"Justice?" Alex asked in mock confusion. "Guys do you know something called justice?" Alex asked Victor and Benedikt, drawing chuckles from them. "You, Minister, should know better than anyone that justice is something that everyone claims to want and only few ever get. As a fact only the victor gets his own justice. The loser will always be vilified, no matter who was at fault. The only justice that this world knows is victory. So are you really willing to fight for what you claim to be justice? Are you willing to start a war here and now?" Alex looked sternly at the politician, daring him to answer.

Louis Delacour was in a precarious situation. He could either tarnish his own reputation by backing off, making people see him as a pushover... or else he could force the Covenant to extradite Elena Grindelwald. But fighting? They were only children, dangerous children, but children none the less. But he could see them on the ship, their wands drawn, as they all glared at him and his men. They would fight without a doubt and they would do anything to win. Grindelwald was right, this would cause war. And he knew that France was not ready for a war against any other country.

The situation was tense as everyone awaited the answer from the French Minister. But to everyone's mutual annoyance Albus Dumbledore rushed out of his castle towards the possible battlefield. He had just returned from the ICW conference, much later than he would have liked. There were some things he had to do after he lost this position as Supreme Mugwump, so his return was delayed much to his chagrin. But not five minutes after he had returned, his deputy had informed him about what has happened in his absence and about what was about to happen on the Hogwarts grounds because of Minister Delacour's over protectiveness of his family.

When he had finally reached Alexander and Delacour, Albus was out of breath, his old frame not used to this kind of physical exertion. He really rued that he couldn't apparate inside the wards of Hogwarts.

"Gentlemen, please. I must demand that you refrain from using violence. This is a school and I will not allow this place to become a battlefield with all the children here at the moment." Dumbledore said somewhat sternly between pants.

"I will not leave without seeing that dangerous criminal in prison." Delacour said angrily.

"Try, Delacour, I dare you!" Alex replied with equal fervor.

"There will be no fighting here." Dumbledore declared with vehemence. "Minister, please keep your personal squabbles with Ms Grindelwald away from this school and Mr Grindelwald, please stop antagonizing people needlessly."

"This is not over, Grindelwald. I will see your sister thrown into prison as soon as you leave this school even if it causes an international incident. She is a dangerous and deranged criminal and I will stop her from harming any more people."

"You will try and you will fail. All that this will bring you is a war that will destroy all you hold dear, Delacour. Do not force my hand." Alex said threateningly.

"You grandfather was a menace that nearly ruined my country, I won't stand by idly and watch his ill begotten spawn ravage it again." With these words Delacour turned around and stalked away angrily.

"When will you idiots finally get it in your thick skulls that I am not like my grandfather." Alex said vexed, before he turned around and walked back to the ship, leaving Dumbledore alone at the shore.

"I really do hope that is the case... Harry." Dumbledore said as he walked back to the castle, happy that he could avoid that his school became a battleground. It would have messed up all of his plans to bring Alexander... no, Harry back to his side where he belonged. He needed things to stay peaceful for now. But the family feud between Elena Grindelwald and the Delacour family was another homicide

that was just waiting to happen. But maybe he could do something about that and gain some influence on Harry. Yes, surely the girl would be easier to control, in the eyes of the British law she was just a beast and certain laws could be useful to him. And then he could use her to bring Harry back to the right side before the war would start.

Rose had watched the proceedings on the grounds from the castle, looking worriedly out of a window, hoping that nothing would happen to her friends. She knew that many of the Hogwarts Covenant members were on the ship at the moment and in the case that a fight would start, they would all have to fight... and she was more or less imprisoned in this castle and couldn't do anything, her father keeping her under constant surveillance. This caused her to lose all faith in her family, people she once saw as the prime examples for open minded people were now acting little better than the stuck up blood supremacists.

"Those damn dark wizards..." James said with disdain. "Causing one problem after another. The headmaster should just throw them all out, surely he can put an end to this Tournament. We have to get rid of that Covenant before they end what the Death Eaters started."

"With each day that passes I have to see that my judgment concerning my parents had been clouded for far too long." Rose said solemnly. "You are no better than those bigoted pure bloods, you judge without knowing just because your master has told you that he knows best how things are..."

James looked at his daughter with a dark frown, she had been more corrupted by those damn foreigners than he had believed possible. Never before would she have spoken about him in this manner.

"Watch your tone, young one. I am still your father and you will do as I say. Those Durmstrang students may have filled your head with their lies, but I will see that you are set right again. Now let's go, I don't want you to be late for your next class. Where do you have to go?" He asked sternly.

"Potions with your friend, the dungeon bat. Just another bigot who hates without understanding things." Rose spat before she started walking.

"I won't have you talk about me in this way. I am nothing like Snivellus. Where has that soft spoken girl disappeared to that I was once proud to call my daughter?"

"She learned the truth about this world and tried to live her own life until you saw fit to imprison her. Now all that is left is this bitter girl before you. For weeks you have treated me like a prisoner, never leaving me alone outside of classes. You try to control my life and destroy my own decisions and I will not forgive you for this. Neither you nor the woman who has decided to treat me like I'm invisible now." Rose said with anger, her fists clenched as she walked on. All she wanted was to be allowed to make her own decisions, to control her own life. But her parents would never allow her that.

"Your mother is heartbroken because of your decision to join an organization that tries to destroy muggleborns. You made this choice despite knowing that it would make you your own mother's enemy. Do you really believe she could just forget that and continue like nothing had happened?" James chided his daughter.

"Again with your accusations. If you would have ever read the Unity Theses you would know that the things Dumbledore has told you were based on lies and conjecture." She searched something in her bag before she produced a small pamphlet. She held it almost reverently before threw it at her fathers face. "Read this before you try and judge my believes."

James stood still for a moment, looking at his daughter in shock before she continued to rant at him. "Be a bigot, but at least be one that knows the truth, lest you only embarrass our family." She then turned around and stalked off in a fast pace. "I can find my way to the dungeons on my own."

James still stood there, staring at the retreating back of his daughter. When he finally looked down at the pamphlet his daughter had thrown at him. His frown only increased when he saw the title... The Unity Theses... In a fit of anger he drew his wand and set the offending piece of literature on fire before he followed his daughter. In his mind he was seething, cursing the Covenant and Alexander Grindelwald for doing this to his daughter. No matter what Dumbledore believed, James had already lost his son to dark wizards, but he would be damned if he let those bastards steal his daughter from him as well.

The winter holidays were finally over and all students had returned to Durmstrang in time for the beginning of the second term. For Ivanna this was a source of solace in some ways. While she was at home she only thought about her father and that damned Marriage Contract. She had tried to find out more about her intended, but all she could find out without rousing suspicion was that the man was a Brit and was from one of the most prestigious bloodlines. She didn't want to alert her brother and her friends to this problem just yet, she needed more information. She needed to know whether this man was a threat to the Covenant. Surely the man's eagerness to get a contract with her, as her father had described it, was due to her affiliation with Alexander and the leadership of the Covenant and Durmstrang. Maybe she could even put an end to this farce before her friends would have to know.

But at the moment she just tried to forget about this mess and she had just the right person to distract her for some time. Innocent little Astris was extremely eager to continue her training with Ivanna and this time the young Russian was more than happy to oblige. Teaching the hyper Nymph would be a nice change from her else very gloomy thoughts.

After a nearly two hour long training session both Ivanna and Astris were on their way back to Ivanna's temporary office. Despite the exertion before, Astris was still bouncing around Ivanna, firing one question at her after another.

"Ivanna, what will happen to Bobby? He won't be in trouble when our master returns will he?" Astris asked almost timidly, genuinely caring for the well being of her rather big... pet.

"Bobby?" Ivanna asked a bit confused before she remembered the troll that was still hibernating in one of their greenhouses. "Ah your troll... I really don't know what to do with him. He can't stay on the school grounds for ever and I believe Alex would have a seizure when he finds out that you brought such a dangerous beast near the students of this school."

"They won't kill him, will they?" Astris asked.

"Most likely not. But as I said he can't stay either. He will have to go, at least once the harshest winter months are over. Whatever you did

to bring him here, I expect you to help getting him away from the school by March. This way your friend Bobby will be okay and Alex won't have to find out by opening the door of the greenhouse to see your big surprise." Ivanna smiled benevolently at her little protege, hoping to reassure Astris this way.

"Okay. I'm sure he will be so happy that nothing bad will happen." Astris exclaimed, back to her chipper mood.

"Hm, now look at the time. You have classes in twenty minutes, run along and get your stuff, else you will be late. I already told the teachers to ignore your 'It's Ivanna's fault' excuse unless I give you a permission slip to be late or absent." Ivanna smirked as she watched the young Nymph hurry back to her dorm room after a short wave.

Her own mood had immediately returned back to her usual gloominess as she had entered her office. At least she wasn't alone in the room, Rebecca was already there, helping with the paper work that had almost doubled in numbers during her absence. And ever reliable Rebecca was already waiting for her, even going as far as having a hot coffee on the table for her. Ivanna knew she would be flat on her back without Rebecca... and sometimes even Arvid. Those two had become good friends to her in the past months.

"Ah there you are. I already thought you would skip your History lesson again. We really have to catch up on a lot of paperwork... again." Rebecca sighed when she looked at the stack of forms and applications on the desk. "This is ridiculous, people still send the applications for their children directly here instead of to the committee that decides who is allowed to come here. If they would at least label the letter appropriately we could just sort them out, but now we have to open every single one of them. Really why do we have to deal with this, I am sure Karkaroff has never done this."

"No, Rebecca, he has not. He had his secretary sort them and send them back, but alas she is still on her much needed vacation and won't be back before the end of the month." Ivanna sat down on the chair behind the desk and took a sip from her coffee. "But I will sort the letters myself, I have another job for you... something of a more personal nature, should you accept."

Rebecca perked up when she heard that, looking at Ivanna with undivided interest. "A personal request? That is something unusual coming from you. What can I help you with?"

"With this..." Ivanna said as she handed Rebecca a folded parchment.

Rebecca's eyes widened in shock when she read what was written on the parchment. "Your father sold you to one of those pure bloods he hangs out with? Oh that despicable man. Your brother was far too lenient in his description of him." Rebecca said with a frown.

"Well that guy is not exactly one of my father's usual crowd. More like someone with a really big interest in getting married to me of all persons." Ivanna replied.

"You believe it is because you are part of the Covenant's leadership?"

"Most likely. The only other girl connected to Alexander in this way would be Elena, but their parents made it clear that she will never be subjected to a contract. And if this guy really was so keen on getting me... well you can follow my thoughts."

"Hm... the name rings a bell. Definitely British... something old, too." Rebecca said as she tried to remember where she knew the family name of Ivanna's intended from.

"Yes and that is where I need your help. I want you to use Karkaroff's contacts to make some inquiries about this man. But please be discreet, I don't want anyone but us to know about the contract just yet. Please, Rebecca, I need your help." Ivanna looked pleadingly at her friend.

"Are you sure that you don't want to involve Alex and the others? They are currently in Britain, they could find out much more and especially they could do it much less obviously." Rebecca said with a concerned expression.

"No, I want to deal with this without their help if possible. I can't just keep on running to them whenever a problem arises. If this guy is a threat to the Covenant then he is my responsibility and I will take care of him." Ivanna said resolutely.

Rebecca sighed in worry, she really did not like to do it this way. Especially since Karkaroff's contacts are all men of a very shady reputation. She wouldn't have to meet them in person, but just knowing what kind of men she would have to contact gave her the creeps. "Fine, Ivanna. I will help you. But should this guy be too dangerous you must promise me that you will tell the others. It is no shame to get help when your enemy is too big for you to defeat alone."

Ivanna smiled gratefully at her friend, relieved that she could trust Rebecca with such delicate tasks. "Thank you, Rebecca. This means a lot to me, you are a real friend. And I promise that I won't take needless risks with this. There is more at stake than just my freedom." Rebecca nodded when she heard this, sporting a small smile herself.

Moments later the privacy of the two girls was interrupted suddenly when the door to the office was yanked open to admit a tired looking Arvid. The boy looked like he had just ran across the entire school grounds.

"Here you are. I thought you would go to the classes, but no, when we waited for the professor neither of you was there. I only narrowly escaped another boring history lesson. I would really appreciate you would telling me when we do office hours..." He complained annoyed. "I ran like a madman just to get away."

Rebecca looked disapprovingly at the boy, rolling her eyes before she strolled away to start on Ivanna's special task, leaving Arvid alone in the office with Ivanna.

"Good that you are here. I have mountains of work for you to do, so get to it." Ivanna said with a small, sadistic smile. Arvid only groaned in response, not sure if it was such a good idea to skip history to do this instead.

January was slowly coming to an end as Alex sat in his room together with Lilith, both still thinking about their ways to get every Covenant member safely out of Dumbledore's reach once things got too dangerous. It was only a few days prior that Alex had received a letter from his father, stating that Victor had already fulfilled the magical contract that forced him to compete in the Tournament

simply by starting at the first task. Conrad had sent several copies of reports of earlier Tournaments where Champions had dropped out after the first task, either due to their wounds or because they had seen that they did not stand a chance in the competition at all. This of course was a great relief for all of them, especially Victor. At least they would not be forced to leave anyone behind should Dumbledore decide to do something very stupid like causing a war.

But that still did not solve their problem. They could easily withdraw with their Durmstrang members, leaving for their own school. But that would mean to abandon all non Durmstrang Covenant members, that would most likely mean to send those students to their doom. A chance for a peaceful coexistence was not likely and frankly both sides would never agree to such a thing after all that had happened. Especially now with the French officially backing Dumbledore's stance against the Covenant because of Delacour's blatant abuse of his power, making a family feud a political crisis for his entire country. Until the end of this year when all non Durmstrang Covenant member's could switch schools legally they would have to remain here. Taking those students with them before that would only give Dumbledore new ammunition for his crusade against the Grindelwald heir and his followers. As ridiculous as the man had been in the past, Alex wouldn't put it past him to accuse them of kidnapping or worse should they remove students from Hogwarts during the school year. That would only inflame the conflict more.

"I've got an idea. It's time that awful woman does something for us, especially when she considers herself an ally of our cause." Alex said with an triumphant smirk.

"Mind sharing with me what you mean by that? Awful woman... do you mean Adrienne by any chance?" Lilith asked confused.

"Yes. She was so sure that her stupid pendant works under any circumstances, maybe she knows a way to circumvent the Hogwarts wards. If we could ignore them then our retreat could be that much easier." Alex replied as he stood up and walked to his desk to find something to write. "Time to write her a letter, worst case would be that she shows up again, but if she can actually help I would be willing to meet with her once more." He said almost absentmindedly as he started writing.

"Don't even think I would let you go meet her alone this time. That woman is too dangerous to meet her without backup. And I am sure Elena will agree with me and come, too." Lilith stated sternly. "Even if you don't want to expose us to danger we are worried for you and will fight for you. We aren't weak."

"I never said that. I just don't wish to lose either of you... well I don't wish to lose any of my friends, not even Victor. But you two... you are among the most important people in my life together with my parents, losing you would be unbearable." Alex said with an emotional voice, causing Lilith to smile lovingly at him before she hugged him from behind as he sat at the desk. He made it clear to Lilith and Elena that whoever would dare to harm them would pay with his life, consequences be damned. Even if it was his own grandfather or Dumbledore or both combined, he would make them pay. "And Elena won't leave the ship any time soon. Not with those French clowns waiting on the grounds to gang up on her."

"She won't like that. She does not fear the French and the Delacours... but I believe you are right. But maybe it would be even better to send her back to Durmstrang now, before more problems arise." Lilith said tentatively. She knew Elena would kick her ass just for uttering that option.

"Maybe. But for now she remains. Should she show no will to follow my command and leave the ship then I will have no choice..." He suddenly stopped mid sentence as he heard someone in the hallway outside yelling angrily. "Just what the hell is going on now?" Alex sighed exasperated.

"Don't worry, I go and have a look. If it is something serious I will come and tell you." Lilith offered readily. "You just finish your letter, this is important." Before she left she gave Alex a quick kiss, then she was already out of the room to find the source of the commotion.

The hallway was already deserted, no one was in sight and the one who caused the possible problem had disappeared. Lilith decided to have a look around before she would return to Alex and went up to the deck of the ship, looking whether the problem had moved outside. On the deck of the ship were several Covenant members staring at something at the shore, but Lilith could not immediately see what had happened.

Victor was among those students looking at the commotion with an indecipherable expression on his face.

"Victor, what is going on? What problem do we have this time? Please tell me that it isn't Elena going on a rampage to kill the Delacours." Lilith asked worriedly. They really could use some more peaceful days right now, the situation was tense enough as it is.

"It's Benedikt." Well this answer came unexpected for Lilith, though the young Russian itched for a chance to curse the Brits he would follow Alex orders and remain peaceful for now. Why would he cause trouble.

"He... received a letter from his mother and after reading it he kind of... snapped. He ran through the ship yelling and cursing the entire time. Now he is down in the forest destroying trees and everything else that dares stand in his way." Cassiopeia said with a anxious expression as she walked towards Lilith.

"What the hell... I go talk to him, anyone who wants to come feel free to join me. No reason to leave him alone in this state with the suicidal Brits roaming the school grounds." Lilith stated before she left the ship, closely followed by Cassiopeia, Victor and a few fellow Covenant members that knew better then to let Alexander's fiancée alone here at Hogwarts.

As they slowly got closer to Benedikt they could hear him still cursing and yelling in rapid Russian, a trail of destruction making it rather easy to follow him. When they had finally reached him Lilith made a gesture for all others that followed her to wait behind her and not approach Benedikt further.

"Someone get back to the ship and inform Alex about this. All other please keep your eyes open for any interferences." Lilith commanded quickly before she walked forward, only accompanied by Cassiopeia who looked even more worried then before.

"Benedikt!" Lilith said calmly, but the boy completely ignored her, continuing to yell. "BENEDIKT! Calm down." Lilith yelled at him, finally getting his attention after he had reduced another tree to nothing more then splinters. "Just what the hell is wrong with you?"

"WRONG WITH ME? WRONG WITH ME YOU ASK?" He screamed in anger. "I TELL YOU WHAT IS WRONG. MY BASTARD OF A FATHER, THAT IS WHAT IS WRONG. THAT I WAS ONCE MORE UNABLE TO PROTECT MY OWN SISTER FROM THE BASTARD, THAT IS WHAT IS WRONG!"

"What do you mean? What has happened to Ivanna? We haven't heard any negative news from her in her last letter." Lilith asked concerned. At least Benedikt seemed to deflate a bit now.

"He... that fucking bastard... he waited until I wasn't there to help her... and now he sold her to one of his fucking business associates in a marriage contract. I promised to protect her after that incident years ago... I failed again." He said in anguish. Pain and worry etched on his face. But his eyes... his eyes only held unrestrained fury for his own father.

"When did that happen? Ivanna has not told us anything about that."

"During the winter holidays... she was alone at home with our mother when that piece of shit came to give her the contract and taunt her about her powerlessness against his will as her father... bastard must have found it a hilarious present... Mother feared he would come back soon, that is why she waited so long with telling me herself, she thought Ivanna had already told me." Benedikt said bitterly. "He is our father god dammit. Fathers are supposed to help and protect their children... just why does our father have to be such a sick fuck..." Benedikt sunk to his knees as he said that and started hitting the ground with his fists.

Lilith stood there looking shocked at Benedikt, most of the other Covenant members nearby did the same, except Victor who watched something in the distance with a displeased frown. Cassiopeia slowly walked closer to Benedikt before she knelt down next to him hugging him lightly in an attempt to calm him down.

"I kill him..." Benedikt declared loudly. "I know I can't leave right now, but once I am free to do so I will find and kill him. I won't let him hurt my sister ever again. Father or not he will die by my hand... and that bastard that believes he can buy my sister, too."

"Just what the hell have you bloody dark wizards done now!" Yelled an severely annoyed Auror Captain James Potter as he arrived at

the scene of destruction caused by Benedikt. But he was not alone, several of his Aurors and some of his French counterparts had followed him. And even a few Hogwarts students from different houses had come to see what was going on.

Lilith turned towards Potter with a dark look. To say she had come to hate the man would have been an understatement. Ever since Dumbledore tried to make them believe that James Potter was Alex real father she had come to despise the man. His zealous servitude to Dumbledore even after the old goat had nearly killed his daughter made it clear to her that Potter was not redeemable and would have to be disposed of just like Dumbledore. Not far from her Victor and the other Covenant member's already had their wands ready, expecting the worst. Benedikt jumped almost instantly to his feet, glaring at Potter as if the man was the very center of his hatred. Only Cassiopeia's hand on his wand arm kept him from cursing the Brit.

"This does not concern you, Potter. Go back to your master and lick his boots." Lilith sneered at him.

"I won't let you tell me what to do. You are just another dark bitch of your wannabe dark lord. I demand to know what has happened here and I want the answers now, lest I will have to resort to other means to get them." James snapped back. To him all Covenant members were no better than Death Eaters, he had already hunted down many such dark followers and was not afraid of them. That they even went as far as corrupting his own daughter only infuriated him more. He would not allow them to get as far as the Death Eaters before taking them down.

Lilith finally raised her own wand against the man, his threat causing her to see the possible danger they were in. There were only about a dozen Covenant members at the moment and nearly twenty Aurors and a lot of Hogwarts students that could possibly enter the fight in their foolish hunt for glory. Even with Benedikt back on his feet and his anger focused on the Brits this entire situation was far too dangerous. But she wouldn't let Potter get away with his comments either, her pride forbid that. She knew Alex did not want this, but to let Potter get his will was a no go.

"You should watch your mouth, Potter. This is way out of your league. You are just a mindless drone, a pawn in Dumbledore's

game for his own greater good. Cast the first spell and I promise you that your life will end soon. Not because we used unfair means, but because Dumbledore will sacrifice his pawns whenever he sees fit. And you are expendable, especially when you cause a war... At least Rose is not as dumb as you are and sees the world how it really is. She will get far in our world with the help of the Covenant." Lilith taunted the man, seeing his anger rise with every word, his head becoming an ugly shade of red in the process.

"You will not corrupt my daughter any further you dark scum. People like you have already cost me my son, but you will only get my daughter over my dead body!" James declared in rage.

"She already is one of us and you can do nothing to change that. Go home and hide, Potter. You cannot stop the changes in our world or the changes in your daughter for the matter..."

This was just too much, in a fit of rage James cast a curse at Lilith, which she evaded easily before she returned the fire. She smiled inwardly. This would cost Potter his head, he started the fight, he was the first to cast a spell and there were too many witnesses around them to deny it.

The entire situation around Lilith and Potter tensed up even more as they dueled. All other around them were staring at their enemies, daring them to make the first move like Potter had just done. The slightest infraction could cause the situation to explode in one big fight... and the possible start of a war that would change the wizarding world.

Lilith was quickly on the defensive in the fight. Potter was a skilled and seasoned Auror after all, but she wouldn't be defeated that easily. She had to avoid or shield many of his spells, but was also able to land some hit against the man, causing him stagger for a few short seconds before he resumed his attacks. But when she had to roll to the side to avoid a particular strong curse she suddenly found herself face with a second, equally strong curse coming in the direction where she had landed. Unable to avoid it she prepared herself for the impact, her own shield would shatter easily under such an attack. But the hit did not come, Potter's curse bounced of another strong shield that was not of her making. Grateful she looked around, just like Potter did in his confusion as to who interfered with his duel. Lilith let out a relieved sigh when she saw

Alex approach with another large group of Covenant students, his eyes narrowed in anger at Potter.

"Potter, you worthless bastard dare attack my fiancée. I warned you and Dumbledore to stay the fuck away from my family and my friends, but you of course wouldn't listen. You self righteous prick must act without using your fucking brain. You have crossed a line here and I promise when I am done with you you will be begging for me to finally kill you." Alex voice was filled with hatred, his magical aura palpable around him as he approached the hated man. "Victor, take care of Lilith while I deal with the trash." Alex ordered sternly and Victor quickly complied, helping Lilith off the ground and brought her further away from the two wizards that were about to duel each other to death if necessary.

Alex and James started circling each other, daring the other to make the first mistake, trying to unnerve the opponent. "Professor Dumbledore was wrong this once, there is no chance that you are my son. My son Harry could never turn into such an abomination like you." Potter spat at Alex.

"At least there is one thing that we agree on. I neither am nor have I ever been your son. But now I shall become your executioner." Alex said before he cast his first spell in Potter's direction, a strong cutting curse aimed at his legs, which the man could barely avoid in time.

All Covenant members knew that there was one thing you never wanted experience and that was to be on the receiving end of Alexander's wrath, he was scarily vicious once he was mad. It was in cold anger that he had once killed Pajari without remorse, but the kind of hate he showed towards Potter right now was far stronger than what he felt during his first year at Durmstrang.

Potter's first few spells bounced off Alex's shield like annoying flies while Potter was now the one hard pressed to avoid getting hit. As Alex conjured a flame whip from his wand he finally managed to hit Potter, the flaming spell wrapped itself around his enemy's leg, burning it painfully. But Alex was hit too when Potter transfigured the ground underneath Alex to shoot sharp spikes against the Grindelwald heir, leaving many bleeding scratches on his legs.

Undisturbed by his wounds Alex pressed on, forcing Potter more and more on the defense. Potter's attempts to blind or silence his

opponent ended at Alex shield before the Charms could cause any problems, Alex on the other hand retaliated with an overpowered bludgeon hex. But the spell did not hit Potter but the ground in front of the man, throwing up large amounts of the soil, causing a temporary screen that made it impossible for Potter to see what Alex was doing.

When Potter saw his opponent again, Alex was only a few feet away from him, his wand in his left hand while he held his sword in the other. It took him nearly no effort to transfigure the metal of his bracer into his preferred weapon so he could attack Potter head on instead from a distance. A change that the man had not foreseen.

Potter was almost stunned in shock when Alex swung his sword from its position in an upward motion, cutting deeply into the man's chest. But as if this wasn't enough Alex used his wand in his left hand to push Potter forcefully against a nearby tree. All spectators couldn't help but wince at the cracking sound when Potter impacted with the tree. But whether it was the tree or the man's bones that caused the sound was not known at that point.

"Finally learned you lesson, Potter?" Alex asked angrily as he looked down on the fallen man.

"Fuck you, Grindelwald. You will pay for this..."

This reply angered Alex even more, with another flick of his wand Potter levitated above the ground before Alex slammed him repeatedly against another tree. "Never fuck with my family, Potter." Alex spat venomously before he finally relented and let Potter remain on the ground, bleeding and broken from this fight. But to add to the man's humiliation Alex summoned Potter's wand and snapped it. He threw the pieces at his face before he said in a deadly voice. "Be glad that I let you live. Despite you being a despicable lowlife it would most likely sadden Rose when I kill her father. I don't want her to hate me, not when there is still much to do to undo the damage you have done to her over the years. Without you will she will grow powerful and respected as a member of the Covenant." With these words Alex turned away from the beaten man and walked towards Lilith.

Lilith looked grateful and worried at the same time, but at the moment all she wanted was to get away from this awful scene. "Alex... we should go... the goat is making his way here."

Alex turned around to see Dumbledore and a few of his teachers walking towards them in a fast pace, the schools healer among them. Potter would definitely need the medical attention. "Everyone, let's return to the ship for now." Everyone complied, this was an order they all readily obeyed. But before Alex left he turned to the rest of the spectators and the British and French Aurors who looked confused whether they should stop the Covenant or not. "And don't you dare try to blame this on us. Potter brought this upon himself. He started the fight and payed the price. And as long as Minister Fudge is on my side I will see that anyone of you will loose his job should you dare to lie about this. There are enough witnesses to prove the truth." With these words Alex and his friends retreated from the scene only moments before Dumbledore arrived at the scene.

The old headmaster frowned deeply when he saw the by now unconscious form of James Potter on the ground. His exasperation only increased when several people recounted what had happened only moments before, from Potter's arrival and his attack up to the end of the fight. Dumbledore swore to himself that he would get the memories from the spectators to see how powerful Alexander was in this fight. He knew that James Potter was no weakling, but to beat him this thoroughly... the boy was frighteningly powerful as it seemed. But now he would also have to replace James Potter in his plans. His school healer had just finished her preliminary examination and concluded that the man had to be brought to St Mungos for treatment. It was very likely that he would not leave the hospital for months to come due to the damage to his spine and head.

Conrad and Selene sat together in the living room at their manor near Berlin, both looking exhausted after a long and tiring day. The official investigation that had been caused by Dumbledore as his last desperate act as Supreme Mugwump had become more then just an annoyance for them. But now it was finally over for them. The investigators had all necessary documents and would check them for irregularities, not that they would find any. Only a few of them were fake, the majority of the documents were genuine. And even

the forged documents like Alex birth certificate were masterpieces, no one would see them as anything but genuine.

"You still look worried, my dear. Don't fret so much, they will find no irregularities with the documents that would warrant for them to go and make paternity tests with Alex. And even if they would go that far the test would result in nothing but the confirmation that Alex is our son. There is nothing reason to worry." Conrad tried to ease his wife's mind as best as he could, he knew the entire situation was wearing her down.

"It is not the investigation that worries me, Conrad. I fear for Alexander and Elena. My children are in constant danger as long as they remain close to that old maniac. I won't be able to rest until they are back safe and sound." Selene said with a tired voice.

"They are strong, especially Alex. There is nothing Dumbledore could do to change that. And even if the old man believes to know our darkest secrets he lacks the proof to use them against anyone, else he wouldn't have resorted to this ridiculous investigation. Alex and Elena will not falter and return home soon."

"And what if his fears come true and the old man does something so stupid as starting a war? They would be in the epicenter of the fighting. And with my father planning for his own release at the moment... our world is spiraling out of control... this war will possibly destroy as all." Selene said with tears in her eyes. "I just want for all of us to be happy, why can't we just live normal lives, seeing our children growing up peacefully. Watching them marry, having children of their own... but now our lives are marked by death and conflict because of two bickering old men with delusions of grandeur." She said bitterly.

"Our happiness is of our own making. The war will come and it will pass. We have to be strong for some time, but once it is over we will be able to live the lives we deserve." Conrad tried to soothe her, but with little success.

"And what if we don't survive this war? What if one of us dies, I don't want all others to live in grief... the last war my father started caused me to grow up without family... what if Alex and Lilith have children soon and such a thing happens to them..."

"Selene... you worry to much. We will make it out of this. As long as we stick together and be careful there will be nothing that could separate us. Our children need you to support them, not to infect them with you what if scenarios that only cause you grief no matter if they come true or not. Live in the present not the possible future. We will make it and our children will be with us. We are a family and we are strong enough to conquer any future. Neither Albus Dumbledore nor Gellert Grindelwald can change that."

Selene could only nod, hoping that her husband was right. The fight between the ideologies of Dumbledore and Gellert Grindelwald had already cost her family so much. And the future looked grim at this point. But Conrad was right, she shouldn't abandon hope this quickly. And there would be things to look forward to with happiness. Her sons wedding for example, yes it would bring them hope and happiness for the future. Maybe they should even think about having the wedding earlier then originally planned. Times were grim and for their country and all those others that followed her son's agenda it would be a happy occasion for all people to enjoy. No matter what, they needed such rays of hope in the dawn of war.

AN: Well... really hope you liked this chapter more then the last one. I admit the two conflicts in this chapter may be a bit much, but I really wanted to portray Fleur's father as an overprotective person, really which normal father isn't extremely protective of his daughters, especially when they get hurt. And at the same time I have Louis Delacour show how sometimes a countries politics are decided by one persons oppinions, in this case especially when that one person is the in a leadership position where he has too much power without anyone to control him. But please don't worry not every chance for reconciliation between Elena and her aunt are lost yet, but things look grim with Fleur and her father.

Ah and the second conflict with James Potter. What can I say to that... I never really liked James to be truthful. From all the information we got about him in the books he looked to me like a man with a really bad character. I mean his school life was either pranking (bullying) other people for fun or because of which house they were in, or following (stalking) Lily Evans. But that is only my personal oppinion. But because of my oppinion I have portaired him the way he is in this story. He is prideful... more like really arrogant and bigoted. He allows Lilith to coerce him into starting the fight, even though he was stronger the Lilith he still lost the fight against

Alexander. This way he is temporarily out of the game, but he will be back.

Well why did I show Lilith as weak in her fight some might ask. The numerous Lilith haters that still read my story (yes I know you are still here despite what you wrote in the messages^^) will see this as another reason why she is unfit for Alex. But I really want to show her as a different kind of leader then Alex. She isn't a fighter. Alex is the type of leader who fights right on the frontlines, but Lilith is the type of leader that fights more with politics and scheming. So far there were no real chances to show the political strengths of Lilith, but in the sequel to this story this will be a major point in her personal story.

And the small ending scene with Conrad and Selene; I really wanted to bring Selene back into the story. She is after all the daughter of Gellert Grindelwald and Alexander's mother, which makes her one of the most important influences on his behavior. And of course I had her in here because of the small companion piece I have released together with this chapter. My small oneshot Ambition is about Selene's parents Gellert Grindelwald and Lorraine Rivet, so everyone who is interested in this little background about how Selene came to be, feel free to read the short story.

Anyways I babble too much and most likely most people don't even read this, so I just stop here. Maybe I should have a forum for these kind of long A\N and for readers to ask questions, well maybe I do such a thing later.

Please leave a Review.

Chapter 26: The Lord

Just as fast as the healers rushed James Potter to St Mungos for treatment, the news about what had happened spread around the castle. Rumors spread about how the fight had started, who had started it and how Alexander Grindelwald had bested James Potter as if the man was just a five year old. Even when the first eye witnesses recounted the events from the forest the students still continued spinning the wildest tales.

To the Gryffindors it was clear that the evil Grindelwald had attacked Potter to get rid of the greatest obstacle that kept him from reclaiming the man's daughter for his Covenant. To weaken the Light by destroying one of their most respected men and at the same time crush their spirits by further corrupting the sister of the late boy-who-lived.

The Hufflepuffs were scared witless by the Grindelwald heir and his Covenant. To them this was just the signal that the war everyone feared had finally started and none of them were safe. Not even here at Hogwarts they would be spared.

The students of House Ravenclaw tried to study the situation carefully. They questioned every witness they could find to reconstruct the true events as good as possible to make an educated decision on how to proceed. A group of Ravenclaws had already defected to the Covenant, the rest had yet to come to a decision. Either join one side or declare themselves neutral and try to stay out of the line of fire. But for that decision they needed more facts.

Most curious though were the Slytherins. They openly showed how much they appreciated seeing Potter taken down, beaten by the scion of a dark family no less. Potter was very unpopular within the Snake house for his open distrust and undisguised loathing of every student in green. Most of their house had already chosen their side for the coming war, only those of families that still believed in the return of Voldemort were apprehensive of joining the Covenant. The rest gladly followed the banner of the Grindelwald heir, he gave them what the light oriented teachers at Hogwarts and their pet students had always denied them. Trust, support, honor, a cause that was worth fighting for and last but not least a future where they could live free of prejudices.

The only person in Hogwarts that was still oblivious to what had happened was Rose Potter herself. On her father's orders she had to stay inside his quarters outside of lessons or mealtime. So she sat in her 'prison', waiting for her father to return to bring her to her to the Great Hall for dinner.

But her father did not come, it was unusual. He left her alone to do her homework while he went on his patrol. But he never needed more than an hour for it, but now he had been gone for almost two hours and there was no telling when he would come back.

Should she leave on her own? Risk the scolding she would get for disobeying, being humiliated again in front of all other students and the teachers just because she walked to the Great Hall unsupervised? Her father had really blown a gasket when she left him to walk to potions class on her own. She was hesitant. She was getting hungry, but she really did not want to do at that moment. But her deliberations were cut short when someone knocked on the door of the small common room of her father's quarters.

She quietly walked over to the door, opening it slowly after a moments hesitation. She had expected another teacher or one of the Aurors coming here in an attempt to find her father, but to her surprise it was neither. When the door was open she stood face to face with a smugly grinning Cormac McLaggen.

"Cormac? What are you doing here? You shouldn't have come, my father will get mad when he sees me talking to another student, even if it is another Gryffindor. He suspects Covenant members around every corner, waiting for a chance to abduct me..." Cormac couldn't help but chuckle at the irony of the statement, he was indeed a Covenant member that has come with the intention to take her away from this room.

"Don't worry about your father, Rose. That bas... man will not bother the Covenant in the near future." Cormac said with a hint of satisfaction in his voice.

At this Rose looked at him with confusion clearly written on her face. She folded her arms in front of her chest as she looked at him with an expression that demanded a further explanation.

"Your father made his last mistake today, Rose. In a fit of anger he attacked Lilith Falkenstein and dueled her. She nearly lost, but Lord Grindelwald interfered before your father could do any serious damage to the girl."

Rose gasped audibly, her face pale in shock. "What happened then? Is everyone okay? Is Lilith alright?" Cormac almost snorted in amusement when she didn't even ask about her father before he continued to answer her questions.

"Lilith is alright, a few bruises, nothing serious. But had her fiancée arrived only a second later that could have been different. Your father was in a rage and could have very well killed her. I was too far away from the fight to hear what the last curse your father shot at her was, but it was aimed at her head. But as I said this attack was the last mistake your father has made. Lord Grindelwald has crushed him."

"Is he dead?" Rose finally asked. Despite all that has happened James Potter was still her father. Despite all the bitterness she felt for her parents at the moment she did not wish to see them harmed or worse, dead.

"No, but he was hurt badly. They had to bring him to St Mungos in a rush. Merlin knows if he will ever recover from what our Lord has done to him." Cormac replied with a thoughtful expression. "Lord Grindelwald is a really fearsome opponent. Your father is no slouch, but against our Lord... it was like a first year challenging Dumbledore to a duel."

Rose was shaken when she heard what had transpired earlier. It explained why her father had not shown up. But why had no teacher come to tell her? Did they think that this was not important to her? Or had the teachers given up on her like her parents and almost all of the fellow Hogwarts students...

"What now? What will happen now?" Rose asked weakly.

"I've come to get you, we should head for the ship and see what our Lord has planned now. Your father is a ministry employee and he has attacked the daughter of another country's minister. That could be seen as a reason to go to war. As Covenant members we are directly involved in anything that happens now. Come." Cormac took

Rose's arm and pulled the girl out of the room. It happened so fast that Rose had no time to resist.

Cormac was well aware that he had to act quick now. Even with James Potter gone, some of the Aurors or teachers might try to stop him. But should he succeed in getting Rose safely to the ship and back to the Covenant it would be very profitable for him. This would surely earn him a lot of prestige in the eyes of the Grindelwald heir.

Rose just ran along with Cormac, the shock about all that he had told her just now ran deep and she was unsure how to react to it. But the prospect of seeing the other Covenant members again, the only people that have treated her like a normal human being this year, was enough incentive for her to follow the older Gryffindor.

A thousand thoughts rushed through Alex mind at once. The moment they had returned to the ship he had taken Lilith back to their room, not sparing anyone else a look as they disappeared. Now they were sitting on their bed, Alex holding his fiancée close as he replayed the latest events in his mind.

Where had he erred this time? How could it come to this, how could things turn out that it was Lilith who dueled one of their enemies? She was always the level-headed one, the calm and reasonable one. Elena was impulsive, Benedikt was eager to fight, Merlin even Victor was more likely to start a fight. What had gone wrong for things to turn out this way...

"Alex... you really can let go of me now, you know. I'm alright, we all are..." Lilith said weakly.

"Just what has happened? What the heck has happened?" Alex asked in return. "Why, Lilith?"

"We exchanged words, the usual empty threats, the usual taunts... Potter just snapped and opened fire... it really wasn't half as bad..."

"How can you say it wasn't bad?" Alex snapped back. "That last curse... you know very well what effect a cutting curse has when it hits the head. And don't tell me you could have dodged it... not this time. Had I come a moment later you could be very well dead now, Lilith."

Lilith remained silent after his outburst. She had gone into that fight without completely acknowledging the risks, to her it was always clear that Alex would come to protect her. But what if he was unavailable one day... if he would come too late... she had goaded Potter into that fight for no real reason but annoyance with his behavior.

"I warned you, Lilith. I warned all of you... yet it had to come to this." Alex grumbled.

"Potter deserved everything he got." It was the first and only thought that crossed her mind that moment, a feeble attempt to justify her actions, but a vain attempt at best.

"I don't regret breaking him into pieces, but that is not what I meant. I can't bear the thought of losing you. Today you came very close to your own undoing. Today... the last hope for peace died today, Lilith. And you had a very large part in the killing stroke... now it is only a matter of time until our world will lose itself in the chaos of war." He sounded almost weary as he said this, a somber realization hitting him.

"All those years... all those actions... everything I have done has led us to this. This war will be my responsibility... the blood of all those who will die will be on my hands." He said regretfully.

"Alex, we all followed the same path as you did, we supported your decisions, we made our own. Just like my actions today, there were many such decisions that you had no say in. It will be our war, a war that we all have worked towards. We all agreed to your words. Our world needs to change and to change it we have to destroy the old one first..."

"Still... my actions have set the path for all of us." He sighed deeply. "Now I'm becoming death, the destroyer of worlds... Even though it was a muggle who said that I can't help but feel the same way. Had you never met me, your life would be peaceful, safe. It is the same for all of you. Had I never been born... Elena would still have her mother and sister, Benedikt wouldn't have vowed to murder his own father, Ivanna would have never been abused by her father for defying his expectations... all the other students would have never gotten hurt in a fight against a dragon. My existence has changed the fate of many people... for the worse as it seems."

Lilith looked at him intently, seeing the sadness in his eyes. She desperately wanted to say something, anything, just to make him feel better. But no words came.

"You know, it is one thing to talk about fighting and war, but when it is close... My hate for my enemies runs deep, Lilith. I hated Potter before, especially when Dumbledore claimed that this despicable man was supposedly my real father... but when I saw him hurt you I lost it. He can count himself as lucky that he still lives, but I doubt that he will ever have the same life as before."

Lilith gave him a chaste kiss when he said that before she finally spoke. "I never doubted that you would be there to protect me. You are my knight, my protector, my love. You are a great man. The people follow you because you give them hope. Sooner or later there would have been a war and suffering, regardless of whether you exist or not, but your existence and all you represent gives the people the hope they need to survive. They want you to lead them into a new future." She said passionately. Eliciting a humorless laugh from Alex.

"And here I am, wallowing in self pity because of the war that I have provoked. I have a responsibility." He let out a desperate laugh when he thought about that.

"We all do. You are not alone with this burden, Alex."

"I still won't allow you to endanger yourself like this again. I'm the fighter on the battlefield, you are more of a politician. Much safer for you and better for my mind." He gave her a small grin, though it was still rather forced, his gloominess not yet gone completely. "I will have to talk to the others soon. They must be waiting for me..." He stood up with a slight groan, leaving Lilith alone on the bed as he stood.

"Some of them might be panicking, this is not easy for all of us. Most of them are still children, not just because of their age but also because they lack the maturity that we have achieved due to our training and education... We need a plan... and we have to contact our families to warn them about this." Alex nodded in agreement to Lilith's words.

"I know... we should prepare for our departure. Depending on Dumbledore's next move we might have to make a run for it. I don't like running, but in this case it means to be able to fight another day... I should go see the others..."

"Do that, I will write the letters to our parents. Don't worry, we will make it through this in one piece." Lilith was now standing next to him, giving him a loving embrace before she walked over to the desk to begin the letters. Alex looked at her for another moment before he turned around and left the room to find his friends and followers.

At Hogwarts the remaining Covenant members among the school's student body were nervously watching everything that happened around them. No one had seen Dumbledore or any other teacher since the incident. It was unnerving. Those Covenant members that were in Slytherin were huddled together at their table in the Great Hall, talking in hushed voices about what to do next.

"What are we supposed to do now? This isn't good at all..." Theodore Nott looked almost frantically around, searching for anything that would give him a hint on how to proceed now.

"Just calm down you idiot. You are drawing attention towards us." Daphne Greengrass hissed at the nervous boy. "Just where the hell is Black when you need her? She most likely knows what to do in this situation."

"Seeing her attachment to that Kasakow boy I would guess she is on the Durmstrang ship. She spent nearly all free time there for the last few months." Tracy Davis piped up from her place next to Daphne.

"So what now? Stay here and wait for the storm or go to the ship and see the chaos for ourselves?" Blaise Zabini asked casually.

"They are most likely preparing to leave... they will leave us behind for sure!" Nott said with a hint of panic in his voice. "When they find us with those bracers they will know that we have joined Grindelwald and they will punish us. I'm too young to go to Azkaban."

"Shut up, idiot. They won't abandon us. They are not like those idiot Gryffindors who run into a situation without a plan. I am sure they already have everything planned and we just have to show up in

time to be part of it." Daphne said with conviction. "Don't forget that all of us will leave Hogwarts at the end of the year regardless of what happens now, we are already part of their group and they never abandon anyone. Just remember how they risked their lives to save little Potter."

"True, but what now? Wait for a signal or go to the ship?" Blaise asked with a bored expression.

"We shouldn't waste our time arguing here. Let's go to the ship. Just look the Ravens are already on their way. We can wait there for orders and at least we will know that we are safe there if anything unpredictable happens." Daphne replied.

"Unpredicted like a indirect declaration of war by a stupid hotheaded Gryffindor?" Tracy drawled with a grin.

"Yes... things like that. I really hope the bastard is in a world of pain for what he has started today." Daphne growled. "Come on, up with all of you and let's go."

As one all of the Slytherin Covenant members left the table and walked out of the Great Hall. It gained them the attention of nearly the entire Hall, many eyes following the group as they walked towards the castle door.

Rose and Cormac had almost made out of the castle when they encountered the last group of students that they wanted to see at the moment. Right in front of the door that lead out on the school grounds stood Antares Black with his group of Gryffindor misfits, all looking around smugly. When Antares saw Cormac and Rose he frowned and approached them.

"Just hold it there McLaggen. Just what are you doing with that traitor?" Antares glared at Rose with as much contempt as he could muster.

"Stay out of this, Black. Rose goes back to the people she belongs to. Get your bigoted ass out of my way before I make you." Cormac didn't like this situation at all, but he was so close, the door was just there.

"Protecting that bitch again? That little fuck most likely sicked Grindelwald on her father to get out of her punishment." Ron Weasley yelled from his position next to Antares. "I think it is time we make her pay for all the abominable things she has done. Starting with her responsibility for my sister's death!" Ron quickly drew his wand, ready to curse Rose. But he was quickly taken down by several spells that collided with his chest.

Antares looked around to find the sudden attacker to see big group of Slytherin and Ravenclaw students coming their way, all with their wands drawn.

"Just what do you think you bastards are doing? This is no time for house rivalry, this is about stopping those traitors. Stop them before they do any more damage to the Light and to righteous people!" Antares yelled at them, but to no avail.

"Keep you bigotry to yourself. Your Light, your righteousness, all you believe in is a lie. The Greater Good of Albus Dumbledore is nothing but a self serving lie to keep people under the old mans thumb. The time of this idiocy is over, soon the Covenant will expose the truth and then you bastards will pay. The Covenant will prevail." Cormac said with a sneer.

"So you... all of you are traitors as well? So many that have betrayed us... you are worse then Death Eaters! You betray us to those foreigners..." Before Antares could continue his rant he was taken down by a punch from Cormac, the older Gryffindor looking at the fallen boy with contempt and loathing.

"It is people like you that make me ashamed to be a Gryffindor. This isn't about Light and Dark, about British or foreign. This is about the truth, Black, and you are a blind fool. You will never compare to someone like me. I would be ashamed to have someone like you on my side in this war."

"You damn bastard!" Antares growled dangerously. "What are you idiots just standing there for? Stop them dammit!" He yelled at his fellow Gryffindors. Despite being outnumbered at the moment they drew their wands and started hurling hexes and curses, but as quickly as the attack had begun the fight had ended with all Gryffindors on Antares side lying on the ground, bound and stunt.

"You are a fool, Antares Black! I can't see how you are related to someone like Cassiopeia." Rose said sadly as she looked at her former house mate. When she started here at Hogwarts they had been friends... it was a happy time for her. But now all that was left was rivalry and a rift between them that seemed irreconcilable by mere words. "Let us go, Cormac..."

After another dark look at the boy on the ground Cormac followed Rose out of the castle. The Slytherins and Ravenclaws hot on their heels.

"You alright, Rose?" Cormac asked her as he saw her sadness.

Rose gulped once, but she was not willing to share this with Cormac, she didn't want to be the weak girl that needed protection forever... "Yeah. Just a bit shaken because of today's events."

"Understandable. Don't worry, I'll be here if you need me so nothing can go wrong." Cormac said with a cocky grin, eliciting a small smile from Rose.

"But you really like hitting people, don't you? I mean first you punch Weasley and now Antares, I always thought wizards are above physical violence."

"Oh well, those two needed a real wake up call and hitting them seemed like a viable way to do it. Of course I could have cursed them into Oblivion, but doing something atypical, something they would never expect me to do left them with a much bigger shock. One of my more ingenious ideas." The boy boasted. In fact he never really spent much thought on why he used physical violence to put those two down, but this explanation sounded believable enough and kind of heroic, too.

At Durmstrang Ivanna sat together with Rebecca to discuss the information Rebecca could find about her mysterious future husband. She still had hope that she could somehow get rid of the contract and the problems it entailed before her brother would find out about it. She knew very well that Benedikt would go on a rampage, killing her father and her future husband. Not that she was opposed to seeing her father dead, but the problems this would cause for Benedikt and in a long run for the Covenant were unwanted. She did

not want to see her brother in jail for murder, not because of their bastard father.

"So, what did you find, Rebecca? Please tell me you have found something to help with this situation."

"I haven't found much..." Rebecca stated evasively.

"Not much... but you must have something!"

"Yes. Your father has not negotiated the contract with your intended husband, but with a family that acts as legal proxy for the man. Your father has negotiated with the Malfoys."

"Malfoy? My brother wrote in one of his letters about a Malfoy at Hogwarts... he called him an insufferable little git..."

"Lucky for you that it isn't the Malfoy's son you are promised to. Apparently they represent another young lord who has just come into his inheritance. They do everything in such secrecy that I am sure that the young lord must have a lot of enemies."

"Great that means he wanted this contract to get a part of the Covenants power to fight his own enemies... I would rather cut myself off from the Covenant before I allow some stupid bastard to risk my friends lives for his own issues." Ivanna said strongly.

"But just think about it. The Malfoys are a very old and influential family in Britain. To have them act as proxy for your intended would mean that he is important as well. Could also be our ticket to weaken Dumbledore in his own country. Allying ourselves with the powerful families in Britain might be worth quite a lot in the coming war." Rebecca said thoughtfully.

"Then go and marry one of those bastards yourself. I have no inclination to do so..." Ivanna snapped with annoyance. "Anything else you have to share?"

"Not much... the only other thing I could find out is that he is apparently not much older than you, maybe a year or so. At least you won't have to marry some old codger. Karkaroff's contacts seemed very reluctant to talk about him..."

"Great... this was an utter waste of time..." Ivanna stood up and started pacing around. "I'm sorry Rebecca it isn't your fault... I need some time to think." With these words Ivanna left the office, leaving Rebecca behind.

Elena and Victor sat quietly in the large meeting room of the ship, both watching the other students around them curiously. Almost immediately after they had returned to the ship all Covenant members and even the Durmstrang teachers that had come with them to Hogwarts came to this room, waiting for Alexander to tell them what to do next. Everyone was discussing the fight between Alex and Potter, many even laughing about how easily the British Auror had been defeated. But deep down they all knew how serious the situation was.

Elena saw Benedikt in another corner of the room, conversing quietly with Cassiopeia. Elena was glad that the young Black girl was here, she had calmed the knucklehead down and kept him from doing something foolish that could have only made their situation even worse.

Suddenly Victor slammed his fist against the wall next to him, a disgruntled look on his face. Elena looked questioningly at him, unsure what was going on in Victor's mind at the moment.

"There was a bug. I hate bugs." He said matter of factly before he used his wand to cast a cleaning charm on his hand just in case he had hit the insect. "Just what is taking you brother so long? Everyone is already here, even the Brits and Frenchmen. He should hurry up..."

"Just shut up, will you. He will come when he is ready. His fiancée got attacked and he more or less just started a war. Want to see you handle such pressure. Everyone expects him to come out here and tell them another ingenious plan to ensure our victory. He's just one man." Elena snapped at the Bulgarian.

"Hn, he always has a plan. Won't even take a piss without a plan." Victor commented crudely. "He is the leader, he is the one who makes the decisions... they don't call him Lord Grindelwald just for fun, you know. It started as a jest, but all of them know that without him we are screwed. Look around, all those kids. To them he isn't just a man. To them he is Lord Grindelwald, their ruler, their

ingenious leader who will lead them into a golden future. Gods even I joined him because I believed it would be profitable for my future."

"And that has changed now?" Elena asked snappishly.

"No." Victor replied gruffly. "But I can see that we all have become far too dependent on him. If he can't deal with the things that have happened today then we are all goners. I just hope my decision to follow him will be one I never have to regret. I joined to get a better future for me and not to go down in a meaningless fight. So he better gets his ass out here and saves the day."

"You are a selfish bastard." Elena commented darkly. "You should have stayed with your stupid Quidditch, would have spared us a lot of trouble in the long run."

"Would it have changed anything between us if I was just a Quidditch player?" He asked almost mockingly. He did not even expect an answer to this, but when it came it shocked him greatly.

"No. You were my brother's rival, an enemy. How can you even expect me to see you as something else but a threat? Just by accepting his rule and becoming a member of the Covenant? You just stated your reasons for doing so and they make it clear that you still are not trustworthy. My brother is the closest person I have in this world and anyone who poses a threat to him is my enemy." She said seriously.

"Hah." He chuckled sadly. "I knew it would be hard, but I never had an idea it would be a lost cause from the beginning. You are a dangerous woman, Elena. One that holds way too many grudges. But neither am I a man that gives up easily." Victor said with a grunt before he stood up and walked away from Elena, leaving her alone with her thoughts about his last statement.

"Stupid jerk." Elena muttered darkly as she continued looking around. She banished Victor's last words from her mind as she scanned the room. She saw Cassiopeia was now talking with another person she hadn't seen for some time. "So the little Potter has come back despite what Alex has done to her father. She might actually be useful if she is this loyal."

Any further thoughts were cut short when Alex entered the room and all voices stopped suddenly. No one dared to talk as they watched him walk to the front of the room from where they all would be able to see him properly. Elena and Benedikt quickly made their way to stand by his side, Victor though remained sitting among the students, watching Elena with a calculative expression.

Alex looked around the room, seeing all those people that look up to him for guidance. All those people that would follow him to hell and back if necessary. He knew he couldn't let them down. Not now, not in the face of the hardships that awaited all of them. Depending on their home countries reactions to this day they might be at war in only a few short hours.

Seeing the hopeful looks from all those students was just another incentive for him to hold onto his path, to follow it through till the end. All of them had come. Even all those new Covenant members from Hogwarts and the ones from Beauxbatons. He was even more surprised when he saw Rose sitting next to Cassiopeia, both watching him curiously.

"My friends, today's events have left us all in uproar. What has transpired today will inevitably alter our course and eventually throw us into a war that will change the very existence of the magical world. We all knew this day would come soon. We all knew that it would be the bigoted lapdogs of Albus Dumbledore that would start it." Alex' voice was rising with every sentence, his own feelings mixing with the message he wanted to convey to his followers.

"The moment James Potter attacked one of us, my fiancée Lilith no less, they..." At this he pointed in the general direction of the castle. "... have made the decision that fighting is the only viable option to solve our problems. It is now upon us to withstand the rising tide as our enemies will come together to attack us. But we will not bow! We will not falter! WE will prevail!" His words were met with cheers from most of the students in the room, the professors and even some of the Aurors who had come to listen only looked stoically at the young Grindelwald.

"But I am also not a delusional dreamer. I know very well in what danger we are at the moment. We are in the lion's den, sitting directly in front of our greatest enemies seat of power. Therefore we will start our preparations for our departure. To win a war also

means to know which battles one can win. The battle for Hogwarts will come sometime in the future. But it will be at our terms, not the terms of Albus Dumbledore." He saw the growing worry on the faces of the non Durmstrang members of the Covenant. It was obvious that they did not feel comfortable with staying here after the majority of the Covenant was gone.

"But my friends, we will leave no one behind. Keep in mind that all of you that have joined the Covenant are no longer in any position to stay here at Hogwarts. Most of you have already finalized your switch to Durmstrang for the next year, the rest can do it once we are back home. But staying here under Dumbledore's thumb is not possible for any member of our group. I will not force you, but you all are welcome to come back home with us, away from the bigotry and lies. Away from a world that is ruled by light side propaganda that denounces anyone and anything they don't understand. Away from a narrow minded world and into the future of all magical beings. Follow me, follow us into that future." Again this brought cheers and roars of approval from the crowd.

"My friends, work together now, prepare for our departure so we can return another day to end our fight. To end it here where it has started, for the day that Hogwarts falls will mark the day that Albus Dumbledore's reign of ignorance and lies has come to an end." At the end of this he took a step back, signaling that he had indeed finished his short speech.

The crowd had still not calmed down as one of the older Covenant members jumped up from his place and yelled loudly, "All hail Lord Grindelwald, our leader and savior of the magical world!" His proclamation was mirrored by many others until all of the students stood and almost chanted it. Alexander was unsure what to think about this, he even contemplated stopping them from doing any such things in fear that people would start seeing him as the same as his grandfather. But as Benedikt and Elena stepped to his side, Benedikt with a grin and an arm around his best friend's shoulder and Elena with a look of approval on her face, he relented.

It was that moment that Alex saw Karkaroff leave the room hastily. Amidst the chanting and general uproar in the room it was pure luck that he had seen it, he was almost sure that Karkaroff himself had not realized that his departure had been seen. Neither had he

known that Alex had seen the look of shock and disgust on the High Master's face.

"Benedikt..." Alex whispered to the boy next to him. "Igor is probably making a run for it. It's getting dark outside, follow him. You know what to do if he tries to run." Benedikt just nodded before he left with a grim smile on his face. On his way out he quickly gathered his usual team and soon the five students had left the room to follow their elusive High Master.

Albus Dumbledore was pacing restlessly in his office. The heads of the four Houses were all sitting in his office together with some members of the old wizard's Order of the Phoenix. Things were precarious now. The old wizard cursed his own mistakes. Just why had he allowed James Potter to get into this much contact with the Covenant, he shouldn't have encouraged the man to keep an eye on the foreign students. No he should have known how vengeful James felt because of his own daughter.

And now? Now he had the trouble and James was in hospital for an indefinite amount of time. He would have to act soon... but what could he do now?

"ALBUS!" Minerva McGonagall admonished her superior again after numerous attempts to get his attention.

"Yes, Minerva? What were you saying?"

"Albus, what do you intend to do about those awful dark wizards? After what that Grindelwald has done to James he should be sent to Azkaban... the poor James, all because of that despicable boy." The deputy headmistress spat angrily.

"We cannot punish Harry because he has done nothing wrong, Minerva. He simply protected his fiancée... if there is anyone getting punished for this fight then it will be James. He actually tried to kill Ms Falkenstein, the daughter of a Minister no less... his actions can very well lead to many deaths."

"This is an outrage. He was there to defend his daughter from those dark children!" Minerva spluttered.

"A daughter that was not even present at that scene and only mentioned briefly in their conversation. James lost it and tried to commit murder, Minerva. It will be hard to keep him out of prison once they release him from St Mungos." The old wizard sighed. "He made things only worse and alienated his son even more..."

"Will you finally stop that nonsense, Albus. Harry Potter is dead. Alexander Grindelwald isn't him. He does not look like him, he does not act like a Potter child would and for Merlin's sake the vile Grindelwald boy is even years older. Open your eyes and finally admit the truth. You are obsessed with this boy because of who his grandfather is. Get your act together and start acting in the best interest of your school. Make those Durmstrang students leave."

"No, Minerva. Should they leave now then any hope of converting Harry back to the right side will be lost. He must remain here where I can influence him!" The old wizard replied vehemently.

"The only influence you had on him was that you lead all of us into this mess. Had you left him alone things would have never come to this. They would have spent the year here, participated in the Tournament and they would have left in the end. But no you must go and cause one incident after another, enraging our guests and even driving our own students away from us. Don't you see that this is all your fault? That all of this is because of your obsession?" Minerva glared at her superior, not willing to back down.

"That insolent brat is just as guilty as the headmaster, Minerva." Snape drawled from his place. "His arrogance and attempts to subvert our influence on our own students has also lead to this. He recruited directly from our houses."

"Of course you would start with such a claim. Just because most of your Slytherins have defected does not mean that Grindelwald did this to all Houses." Minerva defended her own position, but only got a weak sneer in return.

"Of course, I forgot that Rose Potter is not a Gryffindor anymore. Her house has kicked her out after all and threatens her very life should she ever attempt to return. Of course the heroic lions are completely untouchable. Just like that other Gryffindor that some students have seen running with her towards the ship earlier, away from a small scale battle between Gryffindors and Covenant."

"Albus, we need to get our students back from that ship and then force them to leave. I implore you to finally act on behalf of the school or else I will have to get the Board of Governors to intervene. You must get your priorities in order." Minerva said angrily. One of her Lions being part of the Covenant? She understood why Rose Potter had joined but the mere thought that another would go to those dark wizards was ridiculous.

The old headmaster sighed before he looked disappointed at his deputy. He had really expected her to support him more, but apparently no one understood the threat that the boy would pose should he escape from Hogwarts. Harry Potter or not, as long as Gellert Grindelwald influenced the boy's fate, he would be a threat to all of them. Of course he couldn't tell them that, no one knew that he still visited Gellert from time to time, they should just listen to his guidance, he knew what was best for them after all.

"Alright, Minerva." He finally conceded, forming a new plan. "Tomorrow morning we will gather all Aurors and anyone else who is willing to help. Even the seventh years will do. We will go to the ship and get our students back from them." 'And imprison Grindelwald' he added to himself. Consequences be damned, they were already on the brink of war, this wouldn't do much to escalate it.

"Finally you are taking action. We will drive them out of Britain and away from the poor children of our school." Minerva spoke with a pleased expression.

"Count me out on that, headmaster. I don't want to fight children and neither will I permit you to force my Ravens to fight either." Filius Flitwick said with an angry expression that looked awfully out of place on the small man's face.

"You won't get any of my Puffs either, headmaster. Students fighting students... that is worse then during You-Know-Who's worst times." Pomona Sprout exclaimed before she left the office closely followed by Flitwick.

"Severus?" The headmaster asked almost casually, showing no real reaction to the exclamation from the heads of Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff.

"As if I have a choice. But you will have a hard time finding any Slytherins that are willing to fight for you. The treatment they had to endure in this school sure did nothing to raise your popularity among them." Snape said in a bored manner.

"Then it has to be like this. Tomorrow we will bring this sad chapter of our school's history to an end. Hopefully we can somehow avert the war with our quick reaction to the problems at hand." His words were meaningless and he knew it. The war would come. The only question that was unanswered now was who would have Harry Potter? The Light, the people that he rightfully belonged to, or the Dark, who had stolen him and used him to recreate Gellert Grindelwald's Empire.

Igor Karkaroff was restless as he left the Durmstrang ship. This was not what he had planned for his life. To trade the servitude to one Dark Lord for servitude to another. He had once hoped he could mold the Grindelwald heir, that he could influence him enough to ensure his own safety. But this... today was just the last straw. Too many things had happened that had made it clear that by following the Grindelwalds he will only end up in the middle of another cruel war to satiate the thirst for power of one man. The way they all just worshiped Grindelwald was just the beginning.

Now he had to get away. To get somewhere safe, somewhere far away from Europe. With Grindelwald's ambition he wouldn't be safe anywhere in Europe. But across the ocean... yes that would be a good idea. All he had to do now was escape, all he had to do was reach the ward line of Hogwarts so he could apparate away from this dreadful place.

He was sure no one had seen his sudden departure, but his hopes got crushed the moment he saw a person standing in the half shadows of the early night, obviously waiting for him. When he got closer his blood ran cold when he saw that the one standing there was the Kasakow brat, Grindelwald's best friend and rabid attack dog. Oh and how he seemed to mock him, the only part of the boy's face he could clearly see in the dim light was the boy's mouth which showed as nasty smirk.

"My, my. I almost get the idea you wish to leave us, Igor." Benedikt said mockingly.

"Get out of my way boy. You won't stop me." Karkaroff raised his wand against Benedikt, ready to fight his way through if necessary. He had no time to waste and the boy was surely not strong enough to be a threat.

"I would be careful with where you point your little stick, Igor. You could actually hurt someone."

"Only you if you don't get out of the way, boy. Get out of my way, this is the last warning."

"So this is it? Betrayal? I had expected more from you, Igor." Benedikt said with a bored yawn.

Igor's anger grew with every passing moment, the fear that there might be more pursuers growing with every second. Kasakow was no threat, but Krum or worse that Veela could be a dangerous foe for him. He didn't even want to think about fighting against Grindelwald after what the boy had publicly done to Potter. He tried to end it quickly with a wide variety of curses that he hurled at Benedikt as quickly as he could, but the boy just sidestepped them.

"So be it, Igor. You know the punishment for defection." Benedikt tried to sound sorry, but failed miserably. He had wanted to fight against the High Master for quite some time. He wanted to test his skills the man. Sadly he had no time for a real fight. At least he would finally be able to get another bastard that was just like his father. A good way to test what he would do to that man.

Igor was about to attack again when a spell collided with the hollow of his knee, sending him down on the ground. He looked around frantically, searching for the second attacker, but before he could do anything another spell from a completely different direction impacted with his shoulder, breaking it in the process. A third spell hit his other shoulder, shortly followed by a fourth that impacted with his chest and sent Karkaroff on his back. He could only look around, trying to find his attackers, he only saw Kasakow so far, but no one else.

"Sorry about that, Igor. You must have expected a fair duel, but that would be much more than you deserve." Benedikt said with a sneer as walked closer to the fallen High Master. On the way he came past the man's wand, he must have lost it when he was hit by the second or third spell, and stepped on it until a loud crack signaled

that is was broken in half. "Ups, my bad, Igor. But where you go you won't need a wand."

"You don't have the guts to kill me, Kasakow. You are just talk, without Grindelwald you don't even have enough brain cells to think of a plan, let alone about how to kill someone. What are you gonna do now? Wait till I starve?"

Benedikt chuckled again, but this time it was joined by several others. Out of the shadows suddenly appeared four other students in Durmstrang uniforms, three boys and one girl, all looking coldly at the man before them.

"Not even enough balls to do it alone, you are pathetic." Igor spat at Benedikt.

"As I said, a honorable death in a duel would be more then scum like you deserves. Any last words to the world, Igor?" Benedikt said with a feral grin.

"How about fuck you, Kasakow. You and your pathetic master and his pathetic Covenant. You will all fail and you will all rot in Azkaban." Igor was almost foaming from the mouth as he said that, but his eyes then widened in horror as he saw the bracelet on Benedikts arm glow before it changed its form into a big battle ax.

"I knew you would have no real last words. Just do me a favor. When you get down to hell, tell them to keep a free spot for my father, he will join you soon." Benedikts words were cold, his face now uncaring. As he raised the ax above his head he could hear Karkaroff stammer something to the other students around him, but no one reacted to it. They all either glared at him or looked disinterested. "Bye bye, Igor. Good riddance." With these last words Benedikt brought the ax down and beheaded his former head of school.

The other students had to look away at the sight, but Benedikt tried to play the role of the brave leader and looked at the dead, headless body. Only moments later he quickly walked over to a nearby bush and got rid of his last dinner.

"How could Alex do this in his first year and still look calm and collected after it... god he didn't look sick or puke afterward."

Benedikt complained. "Burn the body, then we will leave." The others quickly complied and conjured fire to incinerate the remains of Igor Karkaroff. No one would ever find out how his life had truly ended.

On the ship Alex had finally managed to leave his followers to return to his room and see how far Lilith had gotten with the letters. In fact the only things he wanted to do right now was find his bed and sleep, but he knew that this was not possible right now. Not with a battle on the horizon and tons of preparations left to do.

But the moment he entered his room he could feel that something was not right. He was shocked when he saw Lilith, her head lying on the desk, her body unmoving except for the rhythmic ups and downs of her chest. With his wand in hand he slowly walked further into the room, scanning every corner to find a clue to who was the assailant... how could he be so careless, everyone was at that meeting and the rest of the ship was unguarded. He had left her exposed.

"You know that was an awfully cliché speech, Alexander." Drawled an amused voice from the direction of the bed. As Alexander looked closer he the outlines of a person hiding in the shadow, a person that he already knew for her problematic behavior.

"What are you doing here, Adrienne? How did you get inside the Hogwarts wards... scratch that, what have you done to Lilith?" Alex asked angrily as he walked over to check on his fiancée.

"Nothing." Adrienne answered innocently.

"Nothing, but..."

"She looked dead on her feet so I did her a favor and sent her sleeping for some time. And no, I did not bite her." The vampire woman said with a smile that showed her white fangs.

Alexander checked Lilith's neck and wrists regardless of Adrienne's words before he let out a relieved sigh when he found no signs that she had been bitten by the vampire. "Now why are you here?"

"Hn, is your memory that bad? If I recall correctly it was you who asked for my help." She deadpanned.

"That letter... I didn't expect you to react this soon, neither did I expect to find you in my room either." Alex said with a frown, positioning himself between Adrienne and Lilith.

"You wanted help to escape this place if there are any... unforeseen problems. And guess what there is a fight about to happen in the morning. Dumbledore is already assembling his followers and any breathing idiot that can wield a wand and believes his lies. You will be outnumbered."

"Not all of us can ignore wards like you."

"If there is a shadow then I can get there. It is simple as that. But why don't you leave now? Just take everyone and get to the edge of the wards to use portkeys back home. Shouldn't be too hard." She looked thoughtful at Alex as she said that, her eyes sometimes drifting to the unconscious girl at the desk just to annoy the boy.

"We plan to take the ship with us. But the preparations take a few hours." Alex replied, knowing that chances were high that she already knew about that.

"Well Dumbledore and his lackeys are currently meeting somewhere away from Hogwarts, in that puny little village so all his ilk can arrive. You get your last respite. But just in case your ship doesn't make it out of the wards so you can get away from here." She suddenly pulled out a small bag and threw it on the desk.

Alex slowly opened the bag and looked at the content. "More amulets?"

"I believe that is obvious." Adrienne said sarcastically. "They are portkeys, one for every living soul on this ship. Covenant, teachers and Aurors. They either activate on command or when the wearer loses consciousness. Works regardless of the wards here. One of my more ingenious creations." The vampire said smugly.

"And what do you want in exchange? You never do anything for free." He looked pointedly at her, daring her to answer.

"Nothing that isn't already promised to me. I want to choose the one which you will give to me as my child. As it is I have changed my mind on the who part and want a child that befits me, not one you

choose." At this her eyes wandered towards Lilith once more, but at that she found herself with Alexander's wand pointed at her face.

"I already told you to stay away from my family. You will not get Lilith, neither will you get Elena or anyone else of my close friends." Alex stated angrily.

"You are so cute when I am messing with you." Adrienne stated with a smirk. "Makes me want to try some of those things you have done with your fiancée, it has been far too long since I had the companionship of a hotblooded male." Her smirk grew even wider when she saw his reaction to that, his embarrassment. "Don't worry. The things I have seen in her mind remain with me. But the offer stands."

"Forget it, I won't be unfaithful to Lilith."

"Well she can take part, too." She chuckled loudly now. "Relax, I was still only messing with you. But back to our business. When I watched your little speech I have seen one girl that intrigued me. I am sure that you know her."

"Who is it, Adrienne. Just spit it out I tire of your games."

"What a nasty temper. Anyways, I want that little Potter girl. The sister of their fabled hero must be worth something. And as far as I know she has only caused you problems so far. Shouldn't be that hard to let her go." She gave him another fanged smile as she finished, but it had little effect on him.

"You want Rose Potter? You do know that Dumbledore will be after you because of that... And the poor girl has been through enough problems already. She had a hard enough life as it is."

"I know. I read her mind like an open book. Her mind defenses are none existent. I know what she has been through and quite frankly I am curious how much of that untapped potential of hers I can draw out. She could be a worthy heir... or at least a fun distraction for some decades." Adrienne said with an unusually stoic expression.

"I leave you the portkeys, just for your information they bring you directly to your own school. I know that you will honor our deal, Alexander. I mean what worth does the life of one girl hold in

comparison to the lives of all others on this ship? You will make the right decision." She walked closer to him and continued in a low, almost husky voice.

"And just so you know, someone else has come to seek the allegiance of my clan. The dark lord the Brits fear so much is not nearly as dead as they claim. Though he has changed since the last time I saw him. If dieing means to look like that then there are a number of men I want to die before they ever come before me again. Not that you would need to. I shall take my leave now, your fiancée wakes up in a few moments and we both don't want her to see you with a beautiful woman in your quarters, lest she could come to the wrong conclusions."

"Just go." Alex growled as he saw her disappear into the shadows.

"And don't forget my offer, strong boy. I am always game for some distraction." Her chuckles resounded for some moments before she was finally completely gone.

"Crazy vampire... as if we don't already have enough problems." He muttered darkly as he saw some more movements from Lilith.

She yawned a bit when she woke up, looking around drowsily. "What happened? Did I fall asleep at work?"

"Not exactly. Adrienne was here and believed it was funny to have you sleep for a bit. And don't worry she didn't try anything." Alex said to his fiancée with a reassuring smile.

Lilith still looked around in shock, trying to see if anything had happened while she was asleep, but she saw nothing. Nothing had changed, everything was still where it was before, even her letter was still lying on the table in the same state it was when she fell asleep. All except for a small bag that was now on the desk next to her.

"Just what was she doing here?" Lilith asked finally.

"Brought those amulets so we have a better chance to escape from Hogwarts." Alex said as he pointed at the bag on the desk.

"And what price did she demand for this? You said she never does anything without gaining something for herself." Lilith asked with slight suspicion.

"She wants Rose." Was all he answered as if it explained everything. And in fact it did explain some things for Lilith. The vampire had chosen the victim herself because they had hesitated too long. But why didn't Alex show any feelings when he said that. He stated it as a fact, not showing whether he agreed or disagreed with the demand.

AN: Oh well I hope there were at least a few surprises in this chapter. I admit I am not really happy with it. As I said I did not have as much time for it as I wanted and in the end I kind of rushed it just to get it done. Hope it was still enjoyable despite that.

Well, still no name for Ivanna's betrothed, but I believe I have given enough clues by now so people can kind of figure it out. He was already mentioned indirectly once by a Hogwarts student, but hey just wait for the next chapter and you will know who it is and why I have chosen him. So even those who have figured it out, please wait with your flames until you know the reason, that is all I ask.

Again a little bit about the relationship between Elena and Victor, I want to make it clear that so far I have not chosen them to be a future pairing. If they ever get together it will be in the sequel, mostly because there are only two chapters left for this story. Needless to say that they have the most complicated relationship amongst the Covenant leadership.

I won't say much about Alex speech and the aftermath. There already people who take this story too seriously. All I have to say about that part is that things are getting serious for the Covenant and now, so close to a fight they look for guidance and leadership even more then before.

Igor's demise was a scene I wanted to add for a long time now. Never really like the man and in canon we only heard that he is dead, but nothing sure about who did it and why. At first I wanted Elena to be the one to end his life. But she kind of filled her quote for psychotic rampages. Benedikt was itching for some action so I gave this to him.

And another little scene with my favorite vampire. I always like to write Adrienne, especially when I want her to mess with Alex. Now I have finally revealed whom she wants as her heir. The only question I won't answer today is whether Alex will do it or not. Adrienne is sure he will, I won't say yes or no at the moment, you just have to wait. The question is whether Alex wants the vampires on his side or lets them join someone else.

Okay that is all for today, please leave a Review and hopefully you will also read the next installment once I had the time to finish it.

Chapter 27: Crossing the Rubicon

Benedikt was unsure whether it was the right time to report to Alex or not. Usually it was common among them that such things as the High Master's passing would be reported immediately. But right now he stood in front of the door to Alex chambers, hesitating as he listened to a rather heated argument between Alex and Lilith.

"How can you even contemplate doing this, Alex? Why her of all people?" Lilith asked angrily.

"Because of her dead brother. The fact that she is the twin sister of Britain's great hero is the cause of Adrienne's fascination. That woman always had a morbid fascination with Voldemort's downfall and since Harry Potter is dead she wants the next best thing, his sister." Alex argued stoically.

"But how can you even consider giving Rose to that vampire? Adrienne is pure evil, I shudder to think what she would do to the poor girl. Rose has already suffered enough."

"Don't you think I know that? The girl has suffered more than most of us could ever fathom, but at the same time she is just one child." Alex snapped at his fiancée.

"So you sacrifice one life just to have those vampire's on our side? Is that really what you are willing to do just to gain more power?" Lilith asked as she glared at Alex.

"I don't have much of a choice. We are at the brink of war, scratch that, we are at war right now. We need all allies we can get to save the lives of our own people."

"We already have many allies; enough to beat Dumbledore and his lackeys. We don't need Adrienne." Lilith replied confidently.

Alex only let out a humorless laugh when he heard that, gaining him a dark look from Lilith. "We do need her. Just to keep her away from our enemies. If we don't get her on our side then she will join forces with someone else. If that happens and she fights against us... I don't even want to think about it. This is the only way to keep the vampires under control."

"Do you really think she would ever join someone else? I have a hard time imagining Dumbledore talking to her about an alliance." Lilith asked, still a bit stumped because of Alex last statement.

"It is not Dumbledore who seeks her allegiance. The Brits have their own dark threats looming in the shadows. According to Adrienne that dark lord, the one called Voldemort, is still alive and regaining his power."

"And you believe her every word? You know that she might just be messing with you, after all that dark lord has been dead for almost fourteen years now..." Lilith said with a hint of confusion in her voice. "It seems ridiculous that he returns just now of all times..."

"Does it really seem so fallacious? The world is in an uproar, his former enemies will be fighting against us and they will be in no shape to oppose him should he regain his old power. The timing would be perfect for him. And it doesn't matter whether Adrienne lied or not, the mere chance that it could happen is too much of a risk to take. I want that woman on our side so I can make sure that she won't harm our people." Alex replied strongly.

"And to do that you are willing to sacrifice a young girl that trusts you enough to pick your side over her own parents... Is that really what you want to do? What you want to be?" Lilith asked sadly.

"It is the only way. Adrienne wants her and she will get her... I am simply exchanging one life for the safety of thousands of others. It is for the greater good of our cause." Alex stated with finality.

"Is this what we have to become in order to win this war? I thought the Covenant is about unity, about supporting all its members, no sacrificing one for the sake of the others..."

"We are at war now... war does not play by the rules. It is do or die now." Alex said after a long sigh. "I don't like this any more than you do..." He embraced his fiancée lightly to comfort her. He knew it wasn't just about Rose what affected Lilith this much; it was more that even now, at the very beginning of the war they already had to sacrifice some of their principles to attain an advantage over their enemies. "Can you please make sure that everyone gathers once more so we can hand out the amulets? It would ease my worries to

know that everyone has one of these. It will keep them safe no matter what happens in the next few hours."

"Of course..." Lilith said almost inaudibly.

"Thank you." Alex said before he kissed her lightly and let her out of the embrace.

Wordlessly Lilith went to leave the room. As she opened the door she saw Benedikt standing there, his arm raised to knock on the door. She looked at him, looking directly in his eyes. There she saw what she had feared, the boy had heard every word of their conversation. He knew what they were about to do... She hesitated a moment, she wanted to say something, but in the end she just walked past Benedikt, leaving this problem to Alex to solve.

"Benedikt... back already?" Alex asked with a strained voice.

"Yes."

"And Karkaroff?"

"He was indeed trying to make a run for it. We have... punished him accordingly." Benedikt said a bit hesitantly. He could feel another wave of nausea when he thought about what he had done only minutes before.

"Thank you, my friend. I know this was not easy for you, but it was necessary." Alex said as he walked over to his friend and placed a hand on the boy's shoulder to guide him further into the room before he closed the door.

Inside he looked impassively at Benedikt. "How much of my conversation with Lilith have you heard?" Inwardly Alex cursed himself that he had not put up some silencing charms, but in the current situation and in the wake of Adrienne's unexpected visit his mind was elsewhere.

"Enough to understand that that vampire bitch has finally decided who she wants... are you really planning on giving that little Potter girl to her?"

"Yes. Unfortunate as it is, I have little choice in this. We have to trade one life..."

"For countless others. I can understand your logic behind that. That evil bitch has chosen the girl just to make things even more difficult for us." Growled Benedikt.

Alex only nodded, relieved that his friend seemed to understand why this had to be done. He was in no mood to explain this all again. "Like it or not, we are better off with her on our side. Of course the Brits will see this as proof that we are all evil and need to be exterminated... But I had little hope for this country to begin with. No matter what we do it will be used against us in the end."

"They will all learn that their propaganda cannot save them from us when we destroy this delusional bunch of bigots." Benedikt said darkly.

"Aye, they will all learn sooner or later. But for now we need to get the hell out of here. Here at Hogwarts we have no chances with our current numbers."

"Don't worry, I have guards keep an eye on the shoreline. With luck we will be gone before the Brits come and if not... well they will learn the hard way that it is a deadly mistake to pick a fight with us." Benedikt said with fake self assurance.

"Don't take killing all too lightly, Benedikt. I don't want you to become one of these blood obsessed bastards that can only live by the suffering of others. We do kill, but only if we have to." Alex said with a sharp look at his friend.

"Aye. Don't worry. I should take my leave now and keep an eye on my subordinates. Make sure that all guards are on their posts and such." Benedikt said as he left the room, leaving Alex alone to contemplate their situation.

"If we manage to survive the next few hours without getting captured or killed by our enemies then all will be well... but that is easier said than done." Alex murmured to himself before he left his room to find Rose and give her Adrienne's first pendant.

Albus Dumbledore looked with a contemplative frown as he saw the number of people that had followed his call to finally end the Covenant. They were numerous, even the French Aurors had joined them on this in order to capture Elena Grindelwald. But still the old wizard had expected more people. He inwardly cursed both James Potter and Sirius Black. The former had to pick a fight he could not win and get himself hospitalized. And the latter could not be trusted with this, Black's accursed daughter was a member of the Covenant and Sirius had made it clear that he supported her decision. He would never help him with this plan. He could have really used the help of both of them, them being highly respected Aurors would have helped immensely with convincing all of the Aurors to aid his cause.

But for now he would have to make things work out without them. Not the ideal situation, but deep down the old wizard knew that he already had a sufficient number of supporters to emerge victorious during their attack. They would have to overcome mere students, the few Aurors and teachers they had with them would surely be no problem.

Now he only had to find a way to convince the boy to switch sides. Once Harry was in his hands he would need all his skills to ensure the boy's loyalty to the Light. But how to do that was still a question he could not answer yet. Those accursed Grindelwalds did a thorough job when they convinced him to resent the Light side and of course anything connected to Albus Dumbledore. But he would have time, yes enough time to find a way. And then Harry would finally defeat all dark forces, Voldemort's and Grindelwald's alike. It was for the greater good after all.

Finding Rose was a rather easy task for Alexander. The girl was looking for him herself and so they almost ran into each other. She smiled hesitantly at him, happy that she had finally found him.

She had wanted to talk to him immediately after his short speech earlier, but he was gone so quickly that she had no time to. From the words of others that she had overheard, she knew that he had went back to his own room. But Rose had no idea where this room was supposed to be. Everyone on the ship seemed extremely busy, all Covenant members seemingly had a duty given to them. Even the other Hogwarts students that had arrived with her had been tasked with some job; everyone except herself. It worried her somehow, but

in the end it made her painfully aware that all the others had been actively part of the Covenant when she had been imprisoned by her own father. The bare thought made her feel uncomfortable, she felt a bit out of place among the other Covenant members just by thinking about this. But she quickly pushed that feeling aside, just happy that she had found Alexander. But even that happiness was slightly spoiled by her uneasiness concerning what she was about to request.

When Alex saw Rose smile at him he couldn't help but feel a twinge of guilt. After what he was about to do to her she would most likely never smile at him again. He would be lucky if she did not hate him for it. Of course she would hate him at first, but with time she would hopefully understand why he had done this to her.

"Rose, it is good to see you with us once more. Got us quite worried about what your father was doing to you, the others barely saw you outside of the classes." Alex said with a fake smile to reassure her.

Rose smile finally vanished; replaced with a look of uneasiness. "My father saw it prudent to have me... isolated from all wrong influences. I've lived like a prisoner ever since the First Task." She shook her head sadly at the memory. "But now I am free, all thanks to you."

"You are not angry about what I did to your father?" Alex asked with a dubious expression.

"I am saddened that it had to come to this, but he acted less like a father these past months. He was blinded by his beliefs, unwilling to accept any different opinion. All I can do now is hope that he will understand my decision one day. Hope is all that I have left of my family." The bitterness in her voice was so palpable that Alex couldn't help but remember what Lilith had said earlier, 'Rose has already suffered enough'. Sending her to Adrienne might finally break her spirit and make her either insane or simply cold and hate filled. But the choice has to be made and now he would have to finish what he had started the day he had first tried to gain Adrienne's loyalty.

"They all will understand sooner or later." Alex replied cryptically.

"Yes... but I have a request... I know the time is less than ideal, but I need to go back to my room one last time. When Cormac came I

barely had time to bring those things I need, I must go there once more to retrieve a personal item." Rose said with uncertainty.

"Rose... you really don't need to worry about such things, where we go people will take care of whatever you might need. You should stay here on the ship where you are safe."

"No, no. You misunderstand. The item I am talking about is unique. It is a Invisibility Cloak that has been in my family's possession for generations. It is much more powerful then any other cloak of this kind. I don't want Dumbledore to get his hands on it..."

"And that thing is really worth the risk? Rose, we are on the brink of war, you might get attacked and killed when you go back there. Just think about your close minded former house mates." Alex admonished. He felt like a hypocrite, talking about her safety when he was about to doom her to a life of servitude to that twisted vampire.

"Please, this is really important to me. It was a gift from my father during my first year at Hogwarts, it is a memorabilia of better times... times when I still had a family that cared about me." She looked down on the ground, unable to hide her sadness, but unwilling to show it outright to Alexander.

Alex couldn't help but sigh. Would it be wrong to deny her this last wish before he doomed her? As far as he knew Dumbledore and his lackeys were not at the castle at the moment, so the risk should be minimal. "Fine." He conceded, albeit reluctantly. "But you will take a team with you to keep you safe." He then took Adrienne's amulet out of his pocket and gave it to Rose. "Keep this, it is a portkey that should work even within the wards of Hogwarts. We are currently distributing them to everyone on the ship. If things go awry I want you to use it without hesitation, is that clear?"

"Yes..." Rose replied, giving him a watery smile as she believed that he really cared about her well being, unaware of what plans existed concerning her. "I will be careful, I promise."

"Good. Wait upstairs on the deck, I will get you a team to protect you." Alex said almost absentmindedly as he fought down another wave of worry. This girl does not make it easy to do anything bad to her. He wondered how her fellow students could ever even think

about harming her. But the consequences of his own decision would most likely haunt him forever, but he hoped that he made the right choice. But now he would have to find a team to send out with her.

Victor was watching the commotion on the ship with great boredom. He was aware what situation they were in, but he also had little doubt that he would make it out of this alive and unscathed. There were few in the Covenant that could boast to be as strong as he is. Only Alexander was stronger than him and the only other person who came close was Elena.

Elena. Thinking about the Veela caused him nothing but frustration after their earlier conversation. Just what did she expect him to do to show his loyalty? She was so distrustful of him it was almost ridiculous. But then why did she talk to him so openly, why had she allowed him to see her so vulnerable after the spat with her aunt? Her actions told him that there must be a lot of trust, but her words made it clear that she did not want to trust him.

He sighed in frustration. "I really should have picked a more reasonable girl. Must have lost my mind." He muttered to no one in particular. But he knew that Elena was the only girl that was worthy of his attention. She was strong, both in will and when it came to fighting. She bows to no one, the only one who could command her was her own brother. For reasons that were beyond Victor's current knowledge she followed Alexander's every command without questioning.

"Ah Victor, good, I've been looking for you." Victor turned towards the voice and saw Alexander standing next to him, much to his exasperation. He really wanted to be left alone with his thoughts right now.

"What? Is it finally time? Have they come to fight or are they still hiding like the cowards that they are?" Victor asked more gruffly than he had wanted.

"No, they are still hiding, but I have a job for you if you are interested in some action before the big battle." Alex replied with a predatory grin.

"And what job would that be?"

"Rose needs to retrieve something from her room at Hogwarts and needs to be protected on her way. It is likely that you will find opposition in either the remaining teachers or students of the school when you enter that building. It is likely that you will get a fight or two."

"Babysitting the little Potter? Why should I waste my time on her?"

"Because it will be a welcome distraction. Don't lie, it is plain obvious that something bothers you. Whatever it is, it must frustrate you to no end."

"What if I tell you that it is your sister that frustrates me?" Victor replied challengingly.

"Then it is between you and her. I don't dictate her relationships with others. Just keep in mind that I will hunt you down and skin you alive if you dare to hurt her." Alex replied almost casually. "So what about the job? Do you feel up to it or should I ask Benedikt? I am sure that he is not scared of some action."

"Such cheap tricks might work on Kasakow, but not on me. Daring me to do this, how pathetic."

"Oh well, guess I have to ask Benedikt then."

"I'll do it and if it is just to show that I am loyal to OUR cause." Victor growled. "Even going as far as doing such a menial task as babysitting your pet project."

"Good. Did you already get yourself one of the amulets?"

"Yes, your woman handed them out to everyone."

"Excellent. Get yourself a team and meet Rose up on deck. Make haste, we don't know how long the Brits will be content with hiding." Alex said with a slight grin. Whatever Elena had done to Victor it had taken its toll on the proud Bulgarian. And it made him more eager to prove himself to the Covenant.

"Just stay out of my way." Victor growled as he pushed past Alex and left.

The winds were howling strongly, causing the waves to crash relentlessly against the cliffs of the small island that housed Nurmengard. In this storm Conrad arrived at the steps of the prison, entering reluctantly. For the first time in months his master has summoned him. He really did not like to be here right now, mostly because he had a dark premonition why his master had summoned him so suddenly. And much to his shock he only ascended a few steps of the tower before he heard steps coming closer.

This was bad for Conrad, this was either who he feared it would be or someone else was here. If it was indeed a stranger it was most likely Dumbledore and it would do no good for Conrad to be seen here by that man.

He firmly gripped his wand as he heard the steps coming closer. He knew that he could not win an open fight against someone like Dumbledore, but maybe if he could surprise him he could get a lucky shot or something like that. He tried to conceal himself in a small corridor while he waited for the other person to pass him so he could attack. But all his attack plans shattered when he heard a booming voice calling out to him.

"Stop playing hide and seek, Conrad. I have no time for such useless games." Oh yes, Conrad knew that voice all too well. So it wasn't Dumbledore, but he wasn't sure if this was really better.

"Yes, my lord. I did not know that it was you so I tried to be careful..."

"Unnecessary. The day has come for me to leave. Today... today is the fiftieth anniversary of my incarceration. Fifty years ago Albus Dumbledore locked me up here, not knowing how soon his spells would weaken. And today I will leave to retake my place once more." Gellert Grindelwald said with his most imperious voice.

"Of course, my lord." Conrad bowed slightly. Inwardly he cursed a thousand times, knowing how easy this could destroy his sons plans. This was the worst possible timing for the old man's escape.

"Come and bring me to your mansion. We have much to plan. There is a world waiting to be taken and enemies waiting to be crushed." Grindelwald said as he walked out of the tower and right into the

storm that was still going strong around Nurmengard. "Ah, even the skies weep tears of joy for my release."

"Please hold onto my arm, my lord. I will take us to my mansion." Conrad stated reluctantly. He wished he could have at least warned Selene in advance, she will surely be shocked when she sees her father for the first time in many years.

A short apparition later they stood in front of the mansion near Berlin, the old wizard inspecting the building critically.

"An impressive building. Befitting for a family like my own." Grindelwald said satisfied with what he saw.

"Only the best for my family. This place is also most advantageous for our political aspirations in this country."

"Even being in Prussia has its benefits..." The old wizard muttered.

When they entered the building Conrad immediately heard his wife yell for him, causing Grindelwald to scowl at his son in law.

"Conrad! Conrad come quick!" Selene yelled. "You have to read this..." She came around a corner and stopped dead all of a sudden when she came face to face with her father. She paled considerably when she saw the glare he bestowed upon her. Suddenly she felt unable to speak and even let go of the piece of parchment she had in her hand before. "Father..." She finally stammered out.

"Selene." Gellert replied with a frown. "Still afraid of me as I see. It is no use hoping that you would grow a spine one day." He said with disdain.

Meanwhile Conrad picked up the parchment and read what was written on it. "That god damn bastard. I can't believe his audacity." Conrad suddenly yelled angrily.

"What is the meaning of this, Conrad?" Gellert demanded to know.

"This is a letter from Lilith, Alexander's fiancée, she writes about the latest... I can't find words to describe this travesty properly. That bastard James Potter has tried to kill her in a duel and Alex broke

the man into many small pieces... but we are at war now. They are preparing for a full retreat from Hogwarts."

"WHAT!" Gellert yelled outraged. "Albus, your stupid lackeys have gone too far as it seems." He growled angrily as he snatched the letter from Conrad's hands. "War... we cannot have war yet, my plans are not ready for a war at this point."

"They definitely don't care about your plans, father. My children are in danger and that all because of you old men scheming." Selene snapped at her father in a rare moment of courage.

"Be silent you insolent whelp. It was because of your ineptitude that I had to postpone my plans until my current heir was old enough to be of use. Else I would have had my revenge many years ago. Don't you dare to speak about things you don't even come close to understand." Gellert barked angrily at his daughter, but Selene glared back at him in defiance.

"I have to go to Ministry immediately. We must react in kind to this. This attack will have consequences." Conrad said with conviction.

"Do not engage in open hostilities. I need more time to finish my initial plans, Conrad. I order you to stall this war with any means at your disposal. There mustn't be open warfare for at least a year, do you understand?" Gellert ordered sternly.

"Yes, my lord." Conrad said reluctantly. He did not like this at all. The British had just declared war on them, they had attacked his future daughter in law and now they threatened his son. To not retaliate was... it did not sit right with Conrad.

If he had his way he would see that country burn for this. Years of antagonizing, threatening and smaller conflicts had done nothing to ease the political tensions in Europe. Without that fool Cornelius Fudge and his willingness to agree to almost anything just to keep peace, there would have been a war years ago. And now they had their war and the old Grindelwald had the audacity to demand him to delay it... But Conrad had to do as he was ordered, it had to be done for the safety of his wife and children, lest the old wizard would do something drastic just to force him to comply.

Rose had just left her father's former quarters at Hogwarts, her Invisibility Cloak safely hidden under her robes, as she looked at Victor and his group of seventh year Durmstrang students. They all looked grimly, expecting an attack at any moment as they waited for the young girl to finish whatever business she had in this damned school.

"Are you done?" Victor asked with a snarl. He did not particularly like this girl, in fact it was a complete mystery to him why Alexander even cared about this small, insignificant girl.

"Yes. We can return to the ship now." Rose replied, hard pressed not cower in fear at the angry look she received from the Bulgarian.

"Alright, let's leave this cursed place. Everyone, move out and be careful. Enemies are everywhere." Victor bellowed at the other four students as they walked down the corridor towards the stairs that would lead them to the entrance hall of Hogwarts.

In these dark halls Victor couldn't help but feel extremely paranoid. Especially now when the entire school was seemingly almost deserted. Not a single person, not even the school ghosts showed themselves as they passed through these halls. Rose had stated before that it was likely that Dumbledore had ordered all students to stay in the common rooms of their houses and that the teachers were with Dumbledore preparing for the inevitable fight. But still, to Victor these quiet hallways seemed even more threatening than a room filled with enemies. Here he could not see the looming threat and that irked him to no end.

As they quickly hurried along the dark hallway they did not see the person that suddenly appeared behind them and shot a curse at the student who walked farthest behind the group. His sudden scream in pain as a curse hit his side shocked them all as they quickly turned around to face their enemy. There, not far from them they could see the heavily scarred face of the school's Defense professor, Alastor Moody. The man had not just taken out one of them, but he also had already grabbed Rose and held her before him like a living shield.

"Moody." Victor growled. "They say you are a skilled veteran. Finally a real challenge." Victor smirked ferociously.

"Pah, as if you punks could pose a challenge. Unfortunately if don't have the time to show you how weak you really are, but my own lord awaits my return. And he punishes lateness heavily. Soon your little wannabe dark lord will learn his place when my great master returns." A moment later Moody activated a portkey of his own, disappearing together with Rose. But before he had disappeared Victor had sent a cutting curse at the man; he only heard it impact with flesh, but he could not see where and who it had hit. Both Moody and Rose were gone.

"Ah fuck. Alex will be pissed about this... and Elena will never let me hear the end of this." Victor said with great disappointment. He then looked over to his wounded comrade. "You." He pointed at one of the girls in his group. "Take your portkey and bring him back to Durmstrang, we neither have the time nor the means to treat him here. The rest follows me, we have to hurry back to the ship." The other students complied without questioning and soon the girl and the wounded student had left Hogwarts and returned to the safety of Durmstrang.

As Victor and the rest of his group hurried back to the Durmstrang ship, Rose arrived together with her kidnapper at a strange graveyard, somewhere far away from Hogwarts. Rose was scared and confused about the entire situation. Why had Moody taken her? Did he act on Dumbledore's orders? But why were they here?

When his grip on her lessened Rose turned to look at Moody, but what she saw shocked her yet again. Victor's last spell had indeed hit its target... it had hit Moody's neck, severing the head from the rest of the body, causing it to fall off now that they had arrived with their portkey. The body suddenly buckled and crumpled in a boneless heap, pulling Rose down with it.

"Bring the girl here." She heard a hollow voice order loudly from somewhere near her. She freed herself from the arm of the now dead man and tried to see what was going on. Then she saw something that she never wanted to see again, two men in black robes with bone white masks approaching her with raised wands. Behind them Rose could see a third figure place something in a large cauldron while the voice from before chuckled darkly.

Suddenly a spell impacted with the man who stood near the cauldron causing the others to turn around in surprise. Rose knew

this was her only chance so she immediately gripped the pendant that Alex had given her and forced her magic to activate the portkey that was supposed to bring her to safety. The men at the graveyard did not even see her disappear as they were taken down by spells just like their accomplice before them.

Rose couldn't help but feel nauseous. She never was good at traveling via portkey and two times in such quick succession made her feel the negative effects even worse than normal. But she couldn't think about how she felt as she looked around in panic. As she looked her eyes fell on something that left her breathless. She had heard only a few stories about Durmstrang, but this place... this was definitely not what she had expected. Moments later everything went dark as a spell hit her and knocked Rose out.

Adrienne though knew very well what she had to expect of Alexander now as she watched Rose from the shadows of the waning night like a predator. She chuckled darkly as she opened one of her hands, holding the pendant she had given Alex in her hand. "I will surely enjoy working with you, young Grindelwald." The vampire muttered darkly to herself.

Back at the graveyard a young man approached the cauldron together with another man with long blond hair. The younger man chuckled in amusement as he stepped over the body of the black clad man they had taken down before.

"Now look at this mess, Lucius. One can hardly believe that a self-proclaimed lord would choose such a place." The young man said in obvious amusement.

"Yes, my lord. This place is quite ... dreary." Lucius Malfoy replied dutifully.

"Who are you? Lucius! I order you to kill this perpetrator and finish the ritual." The hollow voice hollered loudly from the cauldron.

"I don't think so." The young man said as he bowed over the cauldron to look at what was inside. "My aren't you an ugly bastard. Hard to believe that we used to be the same person in the past."

"YOU! How is this possible? I demand that you answer me!"

"Hello to you, too. You've made quite a mess, I can hardly believe that my plans for greatness have failed because of my own insanity..." The young man shock his head in displeasure. "Ah but where are my manners. Even though I believe you know very well who I am, let me introduce myself properly. I am Thomas Marvolo Riddle or as I am known now, Marvolo Slytherin, last heir of the Slytherin line and future lord of magical Britain."

"I am the last heir of Slytherin! You are nothing but a shade, some aberration that believes to be me."

"I am you, in fact I am the only real heir of Slytherin now, seeing that you are nothing more then a hideous monster. And once I have reunited all parts of my soul I will wield unimaginable power. But for that to happen you have to disappear!" Marvolo said with malice dripping from every word. "Begone you hideous monster!" With a flick of his wand a white flash hit the current form of the dark lord Voldemort, forcefully ripping his soul from its current body and sucking it into Marvolo.

Seeing the young dark lord buckled slightly after the extraction, Lucius hurriedly steadied his young master. "My lord, are you alright?"

"Yes, Lucius. More then that. Decades of knowledge and power, but without his insanity. The feeling is exhilarating. Let us go. Now that this... thing is taken care of there is no one who will question my true heritage. Now I will reassemble my own forces and do what he never could. I will see Dumbledore and his ilk fall. That Covenant will be a most useful tool for that purpose." Marvolo said with a smirk.

Alexander and Elena were outside on deck as they watched their fellow students rushing around, doing their last preparations. Alex could not help but look grimly in the direction of the village where Dumbledore was currently amassing his forces. He knew that they were too slow, that the time was most likely not enough to save the ship, but still he did not think about abandoning it. They would loose the ship, but they would do so in a fight. Retreating just like that would save all of them, but it would give Dumbledore and his lackeys the moral upper hand in this early days of the war. He could not afford to look weak and scared; if they had to loose then they would make sure that the old man's forces suffered greatly for their victory.

"Elena, we need to talk about our eventual defeat here. We both know that this is a fight we cannot win." Alex said as he looked at his sister.

"Aye, we cannot win but at least we can make them suffer here. For all the shit we had to go through while we had been here, for the hate and unjust treatment... we will make them pay today." Elena spoke with malice in her voice.

"Don't let this hate blind you. We will have our form of revenge, but don't throw your life away for this. We have the amulets to make sure that we all get back home, but do try to make it back in one piece."

"Sure." Was all that Elena replied.

"The French will most likely try to capture you, the only reason Delacour has left them here was to drag you back to Paris so he can put you on trial because of the lies of his daughters." Alex commented worriedly.

"Let them try. I am not dumb enough to let myself get captured by those imbeciles. If they are dumb enough to follow Dumbledore into this battle I truly pity them. They throw their own country into this war just because of the family problems of one man." She snorted in disgust at that. "They will soon know that they are the first to fall."

"Yes, the outcome will not be in their favor on the long run, but still... stay safe." Alex admonished once more, despite the annoyance on Elena's face. "I just don't want to lose my sister here, Elena. Understand that." Alex said before he stepped closer and hugged his sister who hugged him back immediately.

"I know... I don't want you to get hurt either... but it is bound to happen. Let us just promise that we will make it out alive." Elena said with a soft voice, the anger and hate vanishing from her face. Alex just nodded before he hugged her once more and then stepped away from her.

"But there is another thing we need to talk about. We can't let them have this ship. It is a matter of pride to deprive them of this trophy."

"And since it will either one of us or Victor who will be left at the end it falls to us..." Elena finished.

"Yes. I trust you know what I have in mind for a flashy end."

"Oh I might have an idea. They won't even know what hit them." Elena replied with a smirk. But then the smirk vanished as she saw a small group running towards the ship. "What the hell... didn't you send a whole team with Rose?"

"Yeah..." Alex said as he watched the running group with worry.

"Then why are there only three people... and no redhead?"

Alex didn't answer but approach Victor as he finally reached the ship. "Victor! What happened?" Alex demanded to know.

"We've been attacked on our way out. It was that scarred bastard that Dumbledore had teach some classes this year... He took us by surprise, one of us went down before we even knew what happened. Then he took Rose and escaped... I might have hit him with my last spell, but I can't be sure."

Alex was speechless for a second, but there was no need for him to say anything as Elena summarized his thoughts perfectly. "Well... fuck."

"I sent our wounded back home with someone to help him. But concerning Rose... I guess she is lost to us now." Victor said impassively.

Alex closed his eyes for a moment, cursing himself for his stupidity to let her go back to that castle. Now he could only hope that she would use the portkey he gave her. He really did not even want to imagine what Dumbledore's lackeys would want from her. Dumbledore knew that it would cause his side considerable damage to have the sister of their hero serve their enemies, but Rose would no longer support the old goat. What would Dumbledore do now to get her back to his side? And what about Adrienne?

"They will pay. Dumbledore and his ilk, they will all pay." Alex declared with great anger. "This is the last time that they will take us

by surprise." He turned around as he looked out on the lake, seeing the enemy approach them this very moment.

"Prepare the ship for our final departure. Everyone on their posts. The end is near." Alex commanded loudly and everyone followed his order. "They might think we are weak; that we are mere students. They might think that they have the advantage because of their superior numbers. But we will not bow, we will fight with the strength of a thousand men and more. Show them what true fighters of the Covenant are made of." The reaction to his words was immediate, almost all other people around him cheered loudly, taking his words as encouragement. None of them were willing to disappoint him when Alex showed so much trust in their strength. Little did they know that their leader had no illusions that they would win here. It was better for their moral to believe that victory was still within their grasp.

"They are here." Someone shouted and most ran over to the side of the ship to see the shoreline of the lake. And truly there they saw their enemies approach.

Albus Dumbledore, followed by a large group of witches and wizards. The ship drifted slowly away from the shore, but they all knew it was too late. The old wizard already had his wand directed at the lake to stop their escape. With a overbearing motion he cast a snow white spell at the water, causing the lake around the ship to freeze over, trapping the ship in its current position.

Slowly the old wizard approached the ship, the damned jovial smile on his face as he came closer, stopping only a few meters away from the ship.

"It is over, Harry. Stop this madness this instant. Give yourself up and return my students and nobody has to get hurt." Dumbledore exclaimed with a grandfatherly tone.

"Do you really expect me to believe that shit, Dumbledore? No one on this ship is here against his or her will. We are all brothers and sisters in the Covenant, free from the lies that you bigots spout all day; free to make our own decisions and seek unity as the answer to our problems. You have no power over us." Alex yelled at the old man, getting another wave of loud approval from his followers.

"Are you truly willing to sacrifice each and everyone on your ship just to continue your act of defiance? Are you already so far down the road to madness like your supposed grandfather once was? What about the others on the ship, what does your own headmaster say to your arbitrary actions that endanger his students?" Dumbledore asked.

"High Master Karkaroff has left our services... permanently. His lack of loyalty to his own students was disturbing to say the least." Alex said with a cold voice. Not many knew of Karkaroff's death yet, but it was clear that none of his students would miss him.

Dumbledore shook his head sadly as he heard this. "So you have taken another life... you leave me with no choice as it seems. I can't allow you to continue. And I can't allow your Covenant to exist past this day. I won't allow a second Gellert Grindelwald. Not when I can stop it before it happens this time." Again the old wizard raised his wand and created slope on the ice that would allow him and his own followers to enter the ship. "What we have to do now is for the Greater Good of all people. Attack, take them all prisoner." The old wizard intoned and on his command the people behind him started to shoot spells at the ship as they stormed towards their enemies.

But at the same time Alex and his followers retaliated in kind, some jumping off the ship to take the fight to the enemy. While the fight raged around him, Alex was only interested in one opponent. Albus Dumbledore. The man who had dedicated most of his time to make his life miserable. And Dumbledore was only interested in taking down Alexander, hoping that it would end the fighting when the Covenant students saw their leader go down. And thus the two leaders of the fighting sides faced each other, undisturbed by the battle around them as all others seemed to shy away from getting caught in the crossfire of these two powerful men.

"So it has finally come to this." Alexander said with venom dripping from every word.

"You left me with no choice, Harry. You must follow my orders, it is imperative for the future." Dumbledore replied with a false tone of disappointment.

"You can try to force me, old man. You won't succeed. But let us move on to a place with more room, I don't want to ruin my ship

because of you." Alex said before he jumped down on the ice, waiting for his opponent to follow.

"This is your last chance, Harry. Surrender now and your friends shall be spared."

"NEVER! I shall never surrender to the likes of you!"

With a swish of his wand Alex conjured spikes from the ice to shoot at Dumbledore. But the old wizard melted the ice with another spell before they could reach him. But to Alex this was just the beginning of the hardest fight in life.

Benedikt laughed evilly as he took down another one of Dumbledore's lackeys. The boy was one of the seventh year Gryffindors, the very people Benedikt wanted to beat since the beginning of their stay here at Hogwarts. But then another man stepped into his way, looking at him with contempt.

"Another insolent brat with delusions of grandeur. I've seen countless of your kind rise up and die in the ranks of another dark lord. What a waste of magic." The black haired man sneered.

Benedikt's grin only grew wider as he saw who it was. "Severus Snape. What a sign of fate that I get another marked bastard only hours after I had rid us of the other. I will enjoy this."

Snape arched an eyebrow at this, seemingly understanding what Benedikt meant. "So you were the one to kill Igor. Don't believe that I will be as weak as Igor, you foolish boy; against me you will only find death."

"Come and try, bastard." Benedikt replied before he charged at his enemy.

Lilith quickly found herself back to back with Cassiopeia as they fended off the seemingly incessant stream of attackers. When she suddenly started to sink into the ground she saw that the wood of the deck had disappeared, transfigured into sand that made it hard to find a secure footing. When she looked around she the stern deputy headmistress came closer, her wand trained at her.

"You!" The stern witch exclaimed angrily. "You are the reason for all of this. You lured James into that trap, you goaded the poor boy to attack you so your dark lord had a chance to attack him!"

"Ha, you really are insane. Potter was a fool who had it coming for a long time." Exclaimed Cassiopeia as she stepped next to Lilith. "All of you blind fools that trust Dumbledore so unconditionally, all of you will have a rude awakening very soon."

"Of course you would be here. How someone as dark as you could be a child of Sirius Black I will never understand. You are a stain on your fam..."

"Spare me your words, you decided I was evil the moment I had not been sorted into Gryffindor. You are just as bigoted as Dumbledore and because of you all the Gryffindors save a few are blind sheep." Cassiopeia said with a frown.

"Less talk, let's get rid of Dumbledore's bitch." Lilith said with a snarl.

"Aye, let's." Was Cassiopeia's immediate response.

Down on the ice the fight between Alex and the headmaster continued with undiminished force. Neither of the two wizards willing to back down, both focused on winning this test of their strength.

"Time for games is over, old man." Alex said as he moved his wand in a circling motion. Dumbledore waited for a result, but at first nothing happened, the spell seemingly failing. But Alex's grin still grew until the old wizard saw why. He now stood in the center of a circle on the ice, the circle slowly eating through the ice until it reached the water, heating it up in the process. The old wizard could barely apparate out of the way before the place he had stood on before disappeared in a large pillar of boiling steam.

But Alex wasn't finished yet, with another large motion, causing a large burst of fire to shoot out of the tip of his wand, directly towards the headmaster.

Dumbledore looked undisturbed by this as he cast a shield around himself, stopping the fire from reaching him before he sent it back at Alex who extinguished it immediately.

"Getting tired, old man? Already unable to use your own spells against me?" Alex mocked the old wizard.

"This will lead us nowhere, Harry. You can't win."

"We'll see about that."

Dumbledore raised both his arms as he mumbled a spell that Alex could not understand, but he saw the effects immediately as the ice from underneath him shot up and tried to encase him. In the nick of time Alex escaped the icy prison with a somersault. As he picked himself up he was barely able to evade another spell the old wizard had sent at him.

Now on the defense Alex had little time to react to the quick successive attacks Dumbledore hauled at him. When a blasting spell was about to hit him, Alex barely managed to erect a shield to minimize the damage from the powerful spell. It was to be expected that Dumbledore had this much power, the man was feared for a reason. Even something mundane like a blasting curse from the man was powerful enough to blast Alex several meters back, causing him to collide with the stands that been erected in the middle of the now frozen lake for the Second Task of the Triwizard Tournament which would have taken place in a few days.

"It is over, Harry." The old wizard said, sure of his imminent victory. As Alex slowly picked himself up.

The fighting on the ship ebbed down more and more as the combatants of both sides were either hurt, dead or simply disappeared from the ship. The latter was the case for any Covenant members that used their portkeys to escape or lost consciousness. True to Adrienne's words the amulets turned out to be real life savers in this relentless fight.

But some fights still continued with undiminished force. Elena was still fighting off the French Aurors that only had one thing in mind; capturing her to fulfill the order given to them by their Minister. But to them it turned out to be a rather hard task as the Veela quickly disappeared in the bowels of the ship, luring the Aurors into a deadly game of cat and mouse in the many corridors of the ship.

Lilith and Cassiopeia, too, were still engaged in their fight against Hogwarts' deputy headmistress, the woman herself showing unexpected resilience despite her age as she attacked the two girls with a wide variety of transfiguration spells.

Lilith had just disposed of a wildcat the old witch had created from a barrel on the ship, banishing the slain beast at the woman, knocking her over the railing of the ship as Cassiopeia got hit by one of the many stray spells that still flew around. The young Black was knocked out by the spell, stumbling back against Lilith before her portkey took her and a rather unwilling Lilith away from the battlefield. Most would have seen it as a stroke of luck to leave the battlefield, but Lilith was livid when it happened. She wanted to remain, to help Alex in his battle, but alas she no longer had the chance now.

Benedikt was still grinning like a madman during his fight against Snape. So far the man had proven to be a strong opponent, a worthier foe than Karkaroff could have ever been. Around them the ship had started to burn where their stray spells had hit. Like predators both of them circled around each other, ready to strike whenever the enemy showed a sign of weakness.

"Finally someone worth fighting. I already feared Britain was filled with old men and weak bastards." Benedikt said with a predatory grin.

"You would do well not to underestimate me. Unlike Igor I am not foolish enough to die fighting against a mere dunderhead." Snape drawled with utmost contempt in his voice.

"We shall see, Snape. We shall see." Was Benedikt's reply shortly before he sent two curses, a cutting curse and blood boiling curse, at his opponent.

Snape merely sneered before he erected a shield that absorbed both spells without problems. The Potions master retaliated without hesitation, using his own dark cutting curse as he moved his wand in a slashing motion. Benedikt was forced to evade this spell, knowing that his own shields were too weak to repel Snape's attacks.

Benedikt was about to charge at his foe before he was rudely interrupted when the mast of the ship came crashing down between

him and Snape with a loud creak. The impact of mast caused the fires around Benedikt to spread as burning splinters were thrown around.

Snape took this moment to quickly abandon the ship, not willing to die for Dumbledore's ill begotten war. He was no foolish Gryffindor after all. There was no chance that he would remain on a burning ship that was about to sink.

Benedikt looked around angrily, searching for the reason the mast had crashed down as he saw Victor approaching him quickly with a grim look on his face.

"Bastard, this was your doing, wasn't it?" Benedikt yelled at the Bulgarian.

"Idiot, I was doing you a favor. Had this fight continued you would have died sooner or later. That man was not a foe to be taken lightly, you foolish child." Victor growled back at the younger boy. "Take your portkey, this battle is over. Only dead and wounded enemies are left here." With these words Victor pulled out his own amulet and activated the portkey to leave this blasted place.

Benedikt looked around once more. There was truly no one left. All fighting seemed to have ceased. He could see several bodies littering the ground around the ship and some more on the ship itself. Some still moved... others though did not. To his relief Benedikt could not find a single Durmstrang uniform among the fallen, to him it was obvious that all his friends and fellow students had left by now. He hoped they were alright, before he pulled out his own amulet and left Hogwarts behind with a grim smile.

Elena ran through the abandoned corridors of the ship, closely followed by the French Aurors. From time to time she turned around to shoot some spells at her pursuers, but she would not stop for long. At the moment she had only one destination in mind. She would follow Alex' wish and destroy the ship and there was one tool that would be most useful for this task.

It had been deadly quiet for some time now. Before the sounds of fighting, people screaming in anger and agony, had been ever present. But now... Elena knew that it was over. They had lost, there

was no doubt about that. But Dumbledore's lackey would have to pay a steep blood price for this victory, Elena would take care of that.

She ran as fast as she could, dodging the spells that came her way as she disappeared deeper and deeper into the bowels of the ship. When she finally arrived at her destination she entered the large room, securing the door with some charms. She was aware that these would not hinder the Aurors for long, but she did not need that much time to achieve her desired goal.

She was in the ritual room of the ship, the place where the Focus Crystal stood. The crystal that helped them transport the ship to Hogwarts. The very volatile crystal that according to one of their teachers could easily destroy the entire ship if handled incorrectly. Elena smirked as she approached the crystal; she had a very good idea on what to do with this powerful magical artifact. It was a pity that they had to lose it, but sacrifices had to be made. And she was sure that their teacher could surely recreate it sooner or later.

She carefully positioned herself behind the crystal, keeping it between herself and the door as she heard her enemies breaking through. She decided to have some fun with them first before she got rid of them for good.

Out on the ice Alex was finally back on his feet after he had been blown across the ice. Blood was streaming down from a wound on his head which he had received when he hit the stands for the second task. His vision was still slightly impaired as blood leaked into his right eye. But he was still unwilling to back down, there was one last trump card he intended to use against Dumbledore. Something that would for ever remind the old wizard of the young Grindelwald.

"Give up, Harry. You have lost. You are wounded and your so called friends have all abandoned you. It is over, all of this nonsense ends here." Dumbledore said with a very pleased expression on his old face.

"Nothing is over." Alex replied calmly. With another swishing motion he created two shining halos, one underneath him, the other on the opposite side of his opponent. He moved forward, seemingly vanishing into thin air as he moved within the halo.

Dumbledore was quickly on his guard, turning around in a speed unseen for usual men of his age as Alex reappeared inside the halo behind him. Alex had his wand trained on the old wizard ready to fire a spell as Dumbledore wordlessly erected his strongest shield, causing a silver shimmer in front of himself before he cast a stunning spell at the boy before Alex could cast his own spell.

The spell was about to hit Alex, but instead of hitting him it went right through him as if he wasn't even there. "An illusion!" The old wizard exclaimed in shock as he turned back around, seeing Alex drop an invisibility charm as he was only two meters away from him, his sword already mid swing. Before Dumbledore could react Alex had already reached him and finished his attack as it hit its intended mark.

Elena smirked as the Aurors broke through and entered the room, their wands all directed at her as they spread out to make sure that she could not escape this room.

"It is over, Grindelwald. Give up now, we will bring you back to Paris where you will stand trial for your crimes." The lead Auror snarled at her. He and his comrades were visibly out of breath from chasing Elena around the entire ship.

"My, my. So you finally have me cornered. Took you long enough, bloody amateurs." She replied with a laugh. "But I will not be your prisoner. Not now, not ever."

"We have our orders. We will bring you back, its your decision whether it will be healthy, hurt... or in a body bag." The leader said with a hateful glare.

"The only ones to die here will be you scum." Elena said as she raised her wand. The Aurors reacted immediately and shot curses at her, but Elena easily ducked and avoided them all before she sent out one overpowered spell. But it was not aimed at the French, but at the Focus Crystal in the center of the room. The last thing the Aurors saw in their lives was the malicious smirk on the Veela's lips.

The fight on the ice had come to a truce. Alex stood a few meters away from Dumbledore, holding something clutched in his left hand. That thing was an arm, Dumbledore's arm to be precise. But Alex was still seething with anger. The damn blood that impaired his

sight... he had cut off the wrong arm. He had Dumbledore's left arm instead of the wand arm that still held the Elder wand clutched in a fierce grip. He wanted to retrieve that wand, but alas it would not happen this day.

"Seems like you have lost something, old man." Alex said coldly as he tossed arm back towards the old wizard who still stood there, shocked that Alex had managed to hurt him like this.

"It seems that I have underestimated you, Harry. But this changes nothing. You are still beaten and alone. Soon my associates will be here and you will be taken into custody." Dumbledore replied slowly. But moments later his eyes widened in shock as the Durmstrang ship exploded in a giant fireball, the blast wave cracking most of the ice and forcing both him and Alexander to throw themselves down on the ground as they clutched their own sheet of ice.

Alexander was the first back on his feet, his hands now clutching a small amulet. "I am sorry, old man. But I can no longer enjoy the hospitality of your school. I will take my leave now. But be warned. You may have won this battle, but the war you started here is one you cannot win. Enjoy your last days, when I return here it will mark the last day of your life." With these words Alex activated his portkey and left Hogwarts behind.

For the first time in many years Albus Wulfric Brian Dumbledore was utterly speechless. Yes they had won this fight, the Covenant was gone from Hogwarts. But at the same time they had been bested in so many other ways. All his plans had been ruined here. All had been for naught now. He did not even want to imagine how many people have perished here because of Grindelwald's scheming. This was all Gellert Grindelwald's fault, Albus was sure of that. Gellert was the one behind Harry's kidnapping, he was the one who had the boy brainwashed into a tool of darkness and destruction. Now the war that has started here will tear their countries apart. And the supposedly fallen dark lord had the last laugh, all of Gellert's plans had seemingly worked out in the end.

AN: Well so much for the flashy final. I hope the fight between Alex and Dumbledore was at least a bit enjoyable. I know I suck when it comes to describing fight scenes, but at least the rest should be alright.

So... I guess the changes are only obvious to those few who have read the original chapter before, but I guess most of them would agree that this outcome is better then the one I had originally intended. After my really long talks, aka wall of texts in the pms with twelve of my more avid fans and supporters I had really come to reconsider the decision I had made in this chapter and I had to agree that if I had followed the original plan I would have completely obliterated Alex credibility and basically anything concerning the Covenant. Added to that I had a rather heated argument with my muse for posting chapters without letting her read them first... oh well she was not happy with the chapter and after the discussion I came to the decision to change the chapter and select another possible storyline for Rose. For every decision made in the chapters I usually have two or more possible outcomes and in hindsight I have to agree that the one the story will follow now will be more realistic and logical.

And now the final story character has shown his face. Some readers that I had talked to via PMs had already guessed who it would be; the rest I hope are not too shocked or disappointed that it is the young Tom Riddle. I had mentioned before in this story that due to Harry's absence no one was able to save Ginny Weasley and as a consequence the young Tom Riddle was able to manifest in this world. What effect will a young and sane Tom Riddle have on the world and the war? What are his plans concerning the Covenant and of course Ivanna? Oh well sorry to burst your bubble but those questions will be answered in the sequel of this story.

With this chapter the stage is set for the war and for the sequel of this story. All parties involved in the war are out in the open now. Once I have finished the epilogue to this story I will start writing the sequel. But whether I will put that story up on FF is a question I can't answer yet. That really depends on the reactions I get now that this story is mostly done. The number of readers and Reviews has steadily declined with the last few chapters so I am not really sure whether it makes sense continuing here or not. I've seen good and bad reactions to my story in many months I have written it, but the most common in the past were the flames that nearly made me abandon the story some months ago. Well if there is enough interest I would be willing to continue here, otherwise I am just glad for the people who have enjoyed my work. I will announce my final decision when I post the epilogue.

Well I've said all that I wanted to, please leave a Review with your opinions.

Chapter 28: Remember the Fallen

Albus Dumbledore slowly walked towards the place where his faithful followers had started treating their wounded, his mind reeling as he thought about how he should proceed now. He was sure that he could capture Harry; he was so damn close to doing it. But then the boy had a portkey that simply ignored the wards of Hogwarts... Albus knew he had grossly underestimated the resourcefulness of the Covenant and that was the reason Harry got away like this. He would never underestimate the boy again, that much was sure.

"Albus, by Merlin what happened to you?" The sudden exclamation came from Dumbledore's deputy, Minerva McGonagall. The stern witch looked worse for wear with many scrapes and bruises. But she cared little for her own minor injuries when she saw the headmaster approach with one of his arms cut off.

"Nothing that can't be fixed, Minerva. I already cast a stasis-charm on my arm and stopped the bleeding for the moment. I am sure Poppy can put me back together without problems." The old wizard said stoically. He was not amused with what he saw here; there were so many wounded, so many dead. But not a single one of them was wearing the Durmstrang uniform. Had they really failed to get even one of those dark wizards? Had they all escaped like Harry? This was truly a complete failure on their part as it seemed. "Sadly I must say that Harry managed to get away, but do not worry, I will get him next time. He won't continue on his dark path if I can prevent it."

"I don't care about that Grindelwald at the moment. Though we managed to expel the Covenant from our lands the price has been high... almost too high. Several of our students and friends have died today... we have not even seen one of the French Aurors either." Minerva said angrily.

"A sad day." Dumbledore muttered absent minded as he already started to make plans on how to use this tragedy for his campaign. "But their sacrifices will not be forgotten, Minerva. This is just the beginning, but if I can help it this war will end soon... and without any more bloodshed." Without waiting for a reply the old wizard left his deputy to search for the school nurse to fix his arm. He had important things to do now; he had no time to waste and needed to

be healthy to do this. "You have not won, Harry. You will never win this war." The old wizard mumbled to himself as he walked on.

Back at Durmstrang pandemonium had taken control of the school. It had started when the first two students had arrived, one of them badly wounded. The news of the impending battle had caused great unrest in the school and among its students. Many wanted to leave the school immediately and go to Hogwarts to join the fight, hopefully in time to decide the battle in their favor. Others wanted to head home, tell their parents, find out if they are okay. The fact that they were now at the brink of war scared many of the students, especially the younger ones.

Ivanna had a hard time keeping order, but calming everyone down became increasingly difficult as more and more wounded arrived. The school healers were hard pressed to tend to all the wounded. Even with the help of older students it became a race against time that they could not always win.

Death... for the first time since the fight between Alex and Pajari the students had to face death. Friends, teachers, Aurors and even the newest Covenant members were not spared. With every new dead the students at Durmstrang became more quiet and distressed, the knowledge that they had lost the battle at Hogwarts, the first battle of this war, spread quickly and caused slight panic among everyone at the school.

Ivanna was once more walking around the field where their wounded were arriving one by one. Only few could be seen that were still unhurt or at least able to walk on their own. It was then when she heard someone call out to her, a voice that she had not heard in months. She heard the voice again, this time much closer and as she turned around she was quickly engulfed in a tight hug by her brother.

"Benedikt.." Ivanna said hesitantly, unbelieving that he was really here at the moment.

"Yes, sister. I'm back and still healthy."

"I'm so glad. I was scared when all the wounded arrived... when the first dead appeared... I thought." Ivanna said, close to tears.

"I'm fine. Nothing out there could really stop me." He replied cockily.

"You are far too stubborn to die..." Ivanna muttered.

"Aye. And now that I am back I will keep a close eye on you, sister. Our father and that guy from your contract should better look for a dark hole to hide in." Benedikt said as he continued holding his sister close.

Ivanna gasped when she heard that, pushing herself away from him to get a better look at his face. "You know? How?" She said clearly shocked about it. She wanted to have this resolved before Benedikt returned... but now things were different...

"Mom. She wrote me in an attempt to placate me. Had quite the opposite effect when it was the first time I heard about what has happened." At this he looked angrily at his sister. "You had promised us to tell us everything. Why did you hide it? I would do anything to help you and you know that Alex would say the same if he were here right now."

"I just..." Her attempt to justify her actions was cut short when they suddenly heard someone else curse loudly not far from them. Both Benedikt and Ivanna looked in the direction of the sound before they hurried there.

"This is not over yet, Ivanna. We will talk about this later." Benedikt admonished before he hurried away. Ivanna stopped mid stride when she heard that, nodding silently as she looked down on the ground. This was a talk she was not all too keen on having.

When Benedikt reached the cursing person he couldn't help but smirk when he saw that it was Lilith. Her loud exclamations made it very obvious that she had not returned to Durmstrang because she wanted to. But then his smirk vanished when he saw the person lying next to Lilith. There was Cassiopeia, lying on the ground, motionless and pale.

"Cassia!" Benedikt exclaimed as he rushed over to the girl, ignoring Lilith's dark look.

"Calm down, idiot. She ain't dead, she's just unconscious. Some idiots were throwing spells around without worrying about whom they might hit. She will be fine for sure." Lilith said angrily.

"Still, I've got to take her to the healers. Just to be sure." The young Russian replied quickly before he picked Cassiopeia up and hurried away. "We talk later, Ivanna!" Was the last thing he said in his sister's direction before he hurried away, knowing that his sister was safe for the moment and therefore would not need him right now.

"Lilith!" Ivanna called over with a smile on her face to see that her friend was apparently just as fine as her brother.

"Hey." Lilith replied tiredly as she had slowly run out of steam during her rant. "Ivanna, has Alex returned yet?"

"No, not to my knowledge. I haven't seen anyone from our group except Benedikt and you." Ivanna replied a bit worriedly.

"Shit... I can't believe it, I shouldn't be here. I should have stayed with Alex and helped him against Dumbledore, I should..."

"Calm down for once." Lilith's rant was quickly interrupted by Victor who approached her and Ivanna with a bored expression. "If there is anyone among us who can survive a fight against the old goat then it is your fiancée. Both he and Elena are too strong willed to back down. Most likely they are still fighting against the few remaining lackeys of Dumbledore to make sure that we all have time to retreat."

"I hope not... I don't want him to fight those people all alone. I don't even want to think what might happen to him or Elena should they be caught." Lilith said with great worry.

"They can try capturing him, but he won't go down easily. Same goes for Elena." Victor replied stoically. "I'm getting some rest, you know where my room is should you need me." He said as he walked away. Sure he was curious and a bit worried about what had happened to Elena, but he knew she would most likely pull through. And Alex... he can take care of himself. Why should he worry about someone who is even stronger than him. He got out alright so Alex shouldn't really have any difficulties.

"The nerve of that bastard, as always only thinking about himself when others still need help." Lilith seethed.

"Calm down, Lilith. Would you mind telling me who the girl was that my brother was so intent on keeping safe?" Ivanna asked in an attempt to change the subject and distract Lilith from her current worries about Alexander.

"Huh? Oh, you mean Cassia. She is Cassiopeia Black, a pure blood heiress your brother has taken an interest in. Nice girl, really."

"Has taken an interest in? What kind of interest?" Ivanna asked dubiously.

"Worried that you might no longer be the number one girl in your brother's life?" Lilith asked with a small chuckle and a strained smile. She really tried to distract herself, but it wasn't easy.

Conrad returned from the Ministry with growing worry about his son. Lilith had also written her own parents and her father used his position as Minister for the final preparations for the war. When Conrad cautioned his fellow politicians against hasty actions he caused more than one of them to look at him in great bewilderment. So far Conrad had been one of the most avid advocates of war. But his actions now were not of his own free will, but more because of the man who could easily kill his family if he did not comply with his wishes. Gellert only really needed Alexander, the rest of the family were bargaining chips to him, a method to keep both him and Alexander in check, that much was clear to Conrad. So he recited as many reasons to stall the war as he could find, convincing most of his colleagues to follow his words. But this did not happen without causing many of the people who knew him to look at him, knowing that something was indeed wrong with the sudden change in Conrad's behavior.

Though it only took him a few hours to return home, he felt mentally exhausted. Mostly by worry about his family. There was only one thing that he wanted to do now. He just wanted pick up Selene and hurry to Durmstrang to see if he could get any information about his son there. He had already picked up a portkey to the hidden school as he left the Ministry, so all he needed to do was find Selene and go.

"Conrad." When he entered the house, Conrad was quickly stopped by the old Grindelwald. "Have you done as I ordered you to?"

"Yes, my lord. They will not engage in open hostilities for some months to further consolidate our power. They will strengthen our troops and increase our numbers before we go to war... well before we fight this war openly. It was too late to prevent the open declaration of war." Conrad said with an exhausted sigh.

"That is good enough for now."

"Aye, my lord. I will now take Selene and go to Durmstrang to make sure that Alexander returns home safely. Please excuse me, my lord."

"Once he is able to I expect you to bring Alexander to me, there are a great many things we have to discuss now that we have reached the next stage of my plans." The old wizard ordered sternly.

"As you wish." With a curt bow Conrad excused himself to find his wife. Alex would not like hearing that his grandfather was now out of his prison and ready to follow his own invidious plans. All was in question now. Can Alex' plan still succeed despite Gellert trying to influence everything and everyone? Conrad could only hope that his son would succeed in the struggle for dominance that the old Grindelwald would start now.

At Durmstrang Alex arrived in a moment of calmness. He returned home long after most others and those of his followers that had been hurt had been long taken care of. He could still see the commotion near the school's hospital building. He sighed deeply as he thought about the sacrifices this day had demanded of them. It was morning here, the sun up and glaring down on the school with unusual intensity for February; a sunny morning that many of his followers were no longer able to see.

He knew he would have to face the other students sooner or later so he quietly walked towards the hospital to find his sister, Lilith and the rest of his friends. He hoped that they had all gotten out of that mess, but he couldn't be sure. He was especially worried about Elena, when she followed his order and destroyed the ship there was only a very little time for her to escape.

As he came closer to the building and passed by the other students most of them looked at him in awe. The news that he had fought against Dumbledore had spread quickly among the students and seeing him now raised their respect for their leader tenfold. Despite being so young Alexander had fought Dumbledore in an all out duel and escaped with only few injuries. Many students even went as far as bowing before him, mumbling a respectful 'Lord Grindelwald' as he passed them, but Alex did little to acknowledge them as his mind was elsewhere.

"Master Grindelwald!" Another person exclaimed loudly and before Alex could look who it was Arvid had already appeared before him, a clipboard in his hand.

"Arvid." Alex said with little patience in his voice. "Don't take this personal, but either you can tell me something about the whereabouts of Elena and Lilith or I will shove you out of the way and search for myself."

Arvid laughed a bit worriedly as he heard that, before he spoke again. "I can't tell you anything about Lilith as she is not on my list, but Elena has been in a room upstairs where she was being treated for her extensive burn wounds..."

"Which room?" Alex asked harshly.

"Room 211, master..." Before Arvid was even finished with his sentence Alex was already gone.

Outside Ivanna and Lilith had finally reached the hospital as Rebecca came closer to report. "Ivanna, come please, we need your help with something." She then realized that Lilith was standing right next to Ivanna. "Lady Lilith?" Rebecca exclaimed a bit surprised.

"Lady?" Lilith asked with a confused expression.

"Ah... that would take too long right now, I explain that later. First up, what is so urgent, Rebecca?" Ivanna said.

"Ah yes... a few of the students returned earlier from training out on the grounds after they had captured an unknown person, a girl that was wearing a unknown school uniform. They had brought her here.

It took them a bit longer than usual because of the commotion and everything was a bit rash, but... what shall we do with the girl?"

"Where is that girl? We had several Covenant members that are not Durmstrang students among our followers. The girl could be one of them." Lilith stated worriedly.

Rebecca suddenly looked a bit uncomfortable that they might have attacked a fellow Covenant member before she led Ivanna and Lilith to a small room on the ground floor of the hospital. When they entered Lilith suddenly hurried towards the bed where they had placed the still unconscious girl.

"Rose!" Lilith couldn't believe her own eyes. She thought that Alex had sent her to Adrienne... but Rose was here, at Durmstrang. Just what was going on. "What have they done to her?"

"They stunned her and brought her here to have her checked over because her clothing was full of blood. But as it seems the blood was not her own and she is alright." Rebecca said a bit worriedly.

"Tell someone to keep an eye on her and let me know when she wakes up." Lilith spoke hurriedly before she turned to leave the room.

"And where are you going?" Ivanna asked in return.

"I'm going to find my wayward fiancée. We have some things to discuss." Lilith was gone before Ivanna and Rebecca could even blink twice, leaving both other girls confused about the entire situation. They did not understand Lilith's sudden mood change, all they knew was that the little girl they had found caused it, but why... that was a question they could not find an answer for.

Alex sat quietly next to the bed that his sister currently occupied. Though Elena was conscious and most of her wounds treated for now, both Grindelwald siblings remained silent for a long time. In the end it was Elena who spoke first.

"You know... this sucks. I really had no intention to land myself here in a hospital bed. I hesitated too long after I sent that spell at the crystal ... stupid explosion almost caught me..." Elena grumbled.

"I'm just glad you're not dead. Or in captivity." Alex replied truthfully.

"As if the French could ever catch me." Elena replied with a small chuckle. "Have you seen one of the others?"

"Not yet. But I'm sure that they are alright."

"Alex, you know that you don't have to keep up this show for me. I know you and I can see that something troubles you. Spit it out." Elena demanded loudly.

Alex only laughed mirthlessly before he sighed deeply. "I just hope that we have not made the biggest mistakes of our lives... many have died today. Friends and foes alike have lost their lives because of this conflict... and I am the very source of it. You know... without me all these people would still be alive."

"Not this bullshit again, Alex. Every time someone gets harmed or killed because of this conflict you start blaming yourself. Just get over it, these people out there look up to you as their leader so act like one. You don't even have to carry the entire burden alone, I will always be by your side, Lilith will be with you and as much as he irks me sometimes even Benedikt will hardly abandon you. Start thinking like the leader you are supposed to be and be ready to accept the sacrifices that come with your decisions."

"You don't even want to know what sacrifices I have nearly made for our cause..." Alex replied bitterly. "But you are right, I need to accept the consequences of my decisions... no matter if I want it or not, I have to lead all of these people that follow me through the war."

Both Grindelwald siblings lapsed back into silence for some time before Alex stood up. "I'll leave you alone now. Rest for now. I doubt they will keep you here for long though." With a small smile he left his sister and stepped out into the corridor.

He had barely closed the door when he was immediately dragged away by the next girl he was about to search. He had no clue why she acted this way, but Alex allowed Lilith to drag him wordlessly to a abandoned room on that floor; where she closed the door and put up silencing charms before she turned around to look at him with an unreadable expression.

Lilith simply stared at him for some moments, but when Alex was about to say something she threw herself at him and kissed him passionately. They remained like that for some time, only letting their feelings speak for themselves; before Lilith finally broke free from him and took a step back.

"Lilith, I..." But before he could say anything his fiancée slapped him hard across the face. "Okay, I can understand the whole kiss thing, but what was that slap for?" Alex asked a bit peeved about this sudden change in treatment.

"The kiss was because I am glad that you are okay after all. But the slap was because of Rose." Lilith replied angrily.

"But.."

"No, let me continue. I am glad for what you have done, I really am. But why didn't you tell me? Why did you leave me in the believe that you would condemn her? Don't you understand how guilty I felt because of that? I knew I couldn't stop you once you made that decision and now I come here and find out that Rose is safely here at Durmstrang... why didn't you tell me?"

"When we talked about it I was ready to sacrifice her for the safety of all others, but..." Alex looked directly at her as he tried to find the right words for this.

Suddenly a dark shroud blocked out most of the light that came from the window, leaving the room only dimly lit. "In the end he couldn't, his own conscience was quite the hindrance." Adrienne said mirthfully as she stepped out of the shroud.

"Adrienne!" Lilith almost growled at the woman as Alex pushed her behind himself to defend her from the vampire if necessary.

"My and I expected a warmer welcome from my allies." Adrienne said with a mock shocked expression.

"I won't follow your wishes. You won't get anyone from me. But I doubt that you ever expected me to do it anyway." Alex replied stoically.

"Ah, so you have finally realized it. A pity, I was so close. I almost had you act against your own beliefs, but alas it seems that I failed this time." Adrienne let out a small laugh, showing her fangs in the process.

"Just what the hell do you mean?" Lilith asked, slightly confused by the exchange.

"Adrienne never really cared about me sending her someone as a new child. She could have taken anyone she wanted without even involving me since she does not really care about the consequences of her actions. She wanted me to sacrifice my own beliefs and ideals in order to gain power." Alex explained to Lilith while Adrienne simply nodded with a grin.

"And I nearly succeeded corrupting you, little Grindelwald. I was so close." Adrienne said with excitement. "But I will succeed with this, eventually you will act like the ruthless man that I want you to be. Oh the power you could obtain and the fun we could have." She almost purred at him in the end.

"I guess that it won't come to that, Adrienne. I won't hand anyone over to you and therefore we won't be allies. Now leave, stay away from me and my people." Alex replied coldly.

"As you said it was never about the person you sacrifice. But why should I leave now, I have already done you a great favor with the amulets and now I expect you to bring me some fun. If you want it or not; but we are in this together now. This war will be so much fun, the first real excitement since your grandfather failed in his own aspirations for power. He was so dedicated and willing to do anything for power, but he lacked interest in other ... subjects that interest me." She said the last part with an sultry tone as she looked at Alex. "Your grandfather was ruthless but he lacked the passion that I crave. You are the exact opposite... for now."

"You better get that thought out of your head. Now leave, ally or not, I don't have time to deal with you right now." Alex growled at the unwanted guest.

Adrienne merely chuckled before she stepped back and disappeared into the dark shroud she had come from. "We will meet again very soon, little Grindelwald. Remember my words, I will

manage to corrupt you. Don't think that I will simply give up because of one failed attempt. For I am death, the only predator that always gets its prey." With a last dark chuckle Adrienne and her dark shroud were gone and the lights in the room returned to normal.

"You won't succeed, that much I can assure you." Alex grumbled angrily.

"It was a mistake to seek her out from the very beginning. You should have never contacted her." Lilith said worriedly. "Ally or not, this woman will bring us nothing but problems."

"I fear you are right, Lilith. But back then I had no idea that she would be this... fucked up in the head. And no matter if we want it or not, that woman will fight on our side now." He shook his head in consternation. "At least she won't harm our own people this way... at least not as much as she would if she were our enemy."

"But we still need to find a way to deal with her... just in case." Lilith said hesitantly, unsure whether Adrienne was still listening or not.

"We will find a way. She believes herself to be death incarnate, but I doubt that she is even close to that. The countless years in darkness have clouded her mind and nearly driven her insane." Alex then embraced Lilith tightly, just glad to have her close and safe. "But believe me, neither this insane vampire nor anyone else will ever harm you as long as I live. That I swear to you. You are much too important to me then that I allowed that something happens to you."

Lilith just leaned in, resting her head on his shoulder as he held her and she returned the embrace. "You know that I love you more than my own life." Alex whispered into her ear.

"And I love you, Alex. For ever I will love only you..." Lilith mumbled. "Who would have thought that our parents decision to have us marry would result in such feelings."

"It was meant to be. With or without their interference."

Alex and Lilith remained together in that room for some more time before both remembered that they had to return to their duties. But not before Lilith had dragged her fiancée to a healer to have his wounds treated, it would not do for him to run around in this state.

Things had been chaotic after their return to Durmstrang and the other students would need a strong leader now more than ever.

The 'Battle on the frozen lake', as many had started to call the bloody fight at Hogwarts, had cost them dearly. Seventeen of their own people had died in the battle. Seven Durmstrang students, five from Hogwarts, one of their teachers and four of the Aurors that had come to guard them had perished during or after the battle. A terrible loss that for the first time made it painfully obvious for all Covenant members what kind of situation they were in now. It was no longer just beneficial to be part of the Covenant, but with this war their very lives were in danger. But it was too late to back out now, they all knew it. They had sworn an oath that they could not break and they still trusted their leader to lead them to victory.

As the day went on more and more people arrived at Durmstrang. The families of the wounded and dead students had come and gone to see their loved ones. Just like months before when the wounded students from the First Task had arrived, the parents once more had come seeking answers. The truth of the situation was something that most of them could not deal with; what they had feared for so long had finally turned out to be a sad truth. War had come and this time it would engulf all of Europe once more.

It was in the late evening hours when all students, teachers and guests had come together in the main hall of Durmstrang. They all were seeking either answers or guidance in this dark time and the one they expected to give the answers was Alexander himself as he was the center of the entire conflict as it seemed.

All people had already sat down in the hall as Alex entered the room closely followed by Lilith and Benedikt. The first people he saw were his parents sitting together with Elena in the back of the room, watching their son quietly with undivided attention. They had arrived earlier that day, but Alex barely had enough time to talk to them yet. Every time he thought that he could sit down for a few minutes someone had come running, asking for help with all kinds of things. He had long stopped counting the number of people that had spoken to him this day. Students, teachers, parents and even some stray politicians that had come to Durmstrang to talk to him. It was a stressful day and all that in the wake of the first major battle in this war. There was nearly no time for him to spend with his parents so far, but they had been understanding and so Selene had spent her

time with Elena, much to the Veela's consternation. Conrad had taken to talking to the other parents and calming those down who had started to blame Alexander for this crisis.

Alex was glad his parents were there for him. But he also knew that they could do nothing but watch his next action. Now he had to show if he was ready and if the people were ready to follow him.

"Good evening my friends and honored guests of our ancient school. I wish we it was a happier occasion for this kind of meeting, but alas we have assembled here in the wake of a terrible tragedy that will only lead to more suffering in the future." Alex looked grimly as he started to talk, countless pairs of eyes directed at him. The hall was eerily quiet, no one talking, as everyone listened to his words.

"The tragedy that has taken place less then a day ago, the unjust battle that has taken the lives of so many of our friends and comrades. The travesty of self righteous justice that has claimed our brothers and sister will not go unpunished." His voice was calm, but inwardly he felt his own anger rising as he thought about how it had come to all of this. At the same time he saw many people glaring angrily, but whether it was because of him or because of the true culprits... he could not say what caused it. He was glad that Lilith was close to him, her presence alone calmed him down in this situation.

"From the very moment our students had first left our ship and entered Hogwarts; from the very first second there we had been treated like unwanted guests; like enemies by some, like lepers by others. Months of hostility and hatred followed this first day. The perversion they called the Triwizard Tournament was as they claimed a project to improve the inter school relations. But from the very first moment we had to keep away from the other schools to protect ourselves from the unjust hate and animosity." He raised his voice with every sentence as his own anger got the better of him for some time.

"The bigotry that was ever present the actions of our so called hosts, the openly shown disdain towards us, our believes and our people; the way they disregarded even the most common rules of hospitality..." He shook his head sadly before he continued.

"In the end it had come to the fight that finally claimed the lives of so many innocent. It had to come to the death of our brothers and sisters so Albus Dumbledore was satisfied. All this death, all this suffering... all of this just because of the machinations of one senile old man with too much power. His influence on their society runs deep, the false believes he and his ilk had spread among their own students and the ignorance that they openly encourage among all of their people are a threat for all of us." At this Alex had started to show his anger openly, not only in his voice, but also with his gestures as he clenched his fists tightly and made wider gestures than usual.

"But why would this man, this self proclaimed leader of the light, the one they call a defender of everything good and just, act this way? It is a battle of ideologies, it is Dumbledore's undisguised intention to abolish our culture. You all know what the Covenant stands for, what our Unity Theses stand for. We are in his way, our fight is to protect our culture, his fight is to obliterate it." He paused to look around, most people looked agitated, angry even.

Ever since they had published the Unity Theses for the first time, they had also spread any information they had about those who opposed them. Subtly at first, but over time their own media and politicians started to demonize people like Dumbledore. People that advocated changes in their culture to accommodate the muggleborn and bring magical and muggle people closer together. And now with this war it was obvious that this all would be a war about ideologies. Only one side would survive.

"I won't ask anyone to fight this war because of me. But I ask all of you to consider one fact. Can we really overlook Dumbledore's actions? The treatment all of us had to endure during the last year? Can we allow the blind bigotry and hate to fester in our enemies countries until they decide to attack our homes in one of their self-righteous crusades? Can we look away from their actions when they deny us the right to live the lives we were born to live? Can we continue with our own agenda to create unity and protect our own culture from outside influences when our enemies use the growing and completely oblivious masses of muggleborn to weaken us and destroy us?" Alex remained silent for some moments, letting the questions sink in before he shouted the answer out to all who listened. "I say NO! We have to act. This war will not be about me, not about one single person. But it will be about the very survival of

our world, the survival of our way of life." Alex could easily see that his speech already had the intended effect, the people were agitated and eager to act. They all looked at him, soaking up every word he said.

"On this day I humbly ask all of you to aid me in this quest. To help me defend our world like our fallen brothers and sisters have done. Lend me all your strength in the future so those who have killed our friends will receive their just punishment and to destroy the false ideology of Albus Dumbledore that condemns our world and everything his close minded followers can't understand." At this many of the students jumped up from their seats showing their support with loud proclamations for all others to hear. Slowly the wave of support spread around the room, causing even some of the parents to follow their children's example.

"Remember this day! Remember our fallen! But above all remember what we are fighting for. For the Unity of our world and the protection of our way of life." With these last words Alex had finally convinced even the greatest skeptics among the guests. Knowing that he had succeeded in this task Alex closed his eyes for a moment and cast his head downwards. This small gesture looked to all people that watched him as if he bowed slightly before them in gratitude for their support. It was an action that made him look far humbler than he really was.

Then Benedikt stepped forward, his clenched fist raised above his head as he loudly proclaimed, "All hail Lord Grindelwald, for he will lead us into a golden future!" The reaction was instantaneous. Soon nearly all people chanted that proclamation like a prayer. "Hail Grindelwald, protector of the magical world."

Alex first opened his eyes when he felt a hand on his shoulder, giving it a gentle squeeze. He looked at the person who did it and saw Lilith look at him with bright smile that he reciprocated gladly. He looked around the room, seeing his loyal followers, his family sitting in the back of the room and his friends spread out among the other students, all of them smiling at him. It was then that he knew that no matter what the war would bring, he would never have to fight alone during this dark time.

In the back of the room Selene looked at her husband with tears in her eyes. Tears of pride when she saw what her son was already

capable of and how he could inspire hope and loyalty in other people.

"He has grown up into a fine young man. I'm proud to have him as my son." Conrad said beaming with pride. "He will be a fine leader in the future."

"No, Conrad. He already is. Our son will lead our world out of this darkness." Selene spoke with certainty. "Not even my father will be able to stand against him."

AN: And thus ends this story. I know this last chapter wasn't all that great, but hey it was just meant as a way to complete the actions from the last chapter.

I know this entire story seems to end rather... oh well in the middle of the action. But 'The Crimson Vanguard' was always meant to set the stage for the sequel. This story showed how Harry Potter became Alexander Grindelwald, how he started his life as the heir of a dark lord and how he found his own path and created his own group of followers.

I know some people are wondering why I changed Rose's fate, well I believe I have stated my reasons in the last chapter and at the beginning of this one. But don't worry, the new personal story for little Rose will be even better than the one I had in mind before this change. There are countless possibilities how to continue her story and her relationship with the other characters in the sequel so no need to worry here.

There are many things that will happen in the sequel, storylines that have begun here and will continue until the end of overall story. With the war on the horizon, Dumbledore and Gellert scheming and a young Voldemort planning his own rise to power, there will be enough potential for the sequel. In fact I have already planned most of the story that will happen now. I usually write my ideas down. Every single idea, every possible plot and twist. The document with the ideas and the planned chapters for Crimson Vanguard had about 689 pages at the end and included everything that has happened and some things that I have scrapped. The document for the sequel already has around 500 pages and is growing daily.

But I also have to say that I have not yet come to a conclusion whether I will put the sequel up on FF. But I will post a series of drabbles and short stories that will link Crimson Vanguard and the sequel. I will announce there when and when I will post the sequel. But I will write it and put it up somewhere so this story will continue.

But why the drabbles and short stories? Well I have already written some of them and want to share them, but they don't fit into the sequel. And I believe people will like the link between the stories because of the timeskip between Crimson Vanguard and the sequel. This story ends in February 1995, the sequel will start in December 1997. What has happened in the time between will be told in the short stories. And those short stories will be here on FF. I really hope to see my loyal readers again when I post those stories.

Oh well what else can be said at this point? Ah yes, I wish to thank all my readers who have actually dared to read my story to the end; also thank you for all 455 Favs and 458 Alerts. I know I am not all that good and tend to whine a bit too much about the massive flames and all the shit I had to listen about. But I am glad that at least some people stayed despite that. And with nearly 180000 Hits I believe my story wasn't a complete failure.

I have also put up a small poll on my profile just to find out which characters are the most famous and which will need some more work in future stories. I already have a hunch which characters will be on the first three places, but hey surprise me. Maybe I am wrong and certain characters are far more famous than I had anticipated.

A few last words about the sequel, I know people are already getting sick of hearing me talk about the sequel again and again, but this will be last I say about it. Just as an incentive I will give you a short list of words that will describe some of the plotlines: Love, friendship, betrayal, honor, redemption, death, birth, Messiah, Elysium, valkyrie and ascension. I know those words seem pretty random but once you read the story you will know why I have chosen them here.

Time to end this here, one last time thank you all for reading 'The Crimson Vanguard' and please leave a Review with your final thoughts about this story and its end.